Spring 2023 Grantee Kick-off Event

Lawns to Legumes Individual Support

How to successfully plant for pollinators, complete a grant, and be reimbursed

your yard CAN BEE the CHANGE
#Lawns2Legumes

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Blue Thumb
PLANTING FOR CLEAN WATER®

Metro Blooms
GROW. BLOOM. INSPIRE!
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

BWSR focuses on helping private landowners enhance conservation practices on their land to achieve state goals for clean water, clean air, and abundant fish and wildlife.

Blue Thumb — Planting for Clean Water

A public/private partnership helping property owners reduce runoff and improve water quality. Blue Thumb partners include cities, watershed districts, landscape designers, contractors and native plant nurseries.

Metro Blooms

A non-profit 501(c)(3) organization promoting gardening, beautifying our communities, and healing our environment since 1983. Metro Blooms coordinates the Blue Thumb partnership.
Meet today’s presenters and project team:

**Alayna Merchlewitz**  
Blue Thumb/Metro Blooms  
Environmental Education Project Manager

**Paul Erdmann**  
MN Board of Water and Soil Resources  
Ecological Science Conservationist

**Rebecca Rice**  
Blue Thumb/Metro Blooms  
Director

**Alexandra Zerzan**  
Metro Blooms/MN Pollution Control Agency  
MN Greencorps Member

**John Bly**  
Blue Thumb/Metro Blooms  
Director of Operations & Special Projects
Minnesotans want to help pollinators
(Program Started June 2019)

Funding Source:
Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources,
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

Program Focus:
Establish pollinator habitat projects on residential landscapes across Minnesota
to support the Rusty patched bumblebee and other pollinators.

Photos: Heather Holm, Laurie Schneider, Rich Harrison
Why Native Plants?
Why Native Plants?

IMPORTANT: Cultivars/Nativars and hybrids are not reimbursed by Lawns to Legumes. These are genetically modified for aesthetics or other traits.

While they are beautiful and add nice pops of color to your garden, they often produce less pollen and nectar, or none at all. This defeats the purpose of creating pollinator habitat, therefore, they are not reimbursed.

Cultivars usually have single quotes around the last part of their name. Hybrids have an “X” in their name.

Examples
- Agastache ‘Blue Fortune’, Blue Fortune anise hyssop
- Aquilegia X caerulea ‘Origami Red & White’, Origami Red & White columbine

Tips
- Shop at a native plant nursery instead of a chain store
- Check the plant tag! Look for quotations and whimsical names

=native  =cultivar
Why Native Plants?

MN Native

- *Echinacea angustifolia*
  Narrow-leaved Purple Coneflower

- *Aquilegia canadensis*
  Columbine

- *Physocarpus opulifolius*
  Ninebark

Not Native or Cultivar

- *Echinacea purpurea*
  Eastern Purple Coneflower

- *Aquilegia ‘Swan Blue and White’*

- *Physocarpus opulifolius ‘Donna May’*
  Little Devil™ Ninebark

Online resources for native plants and their range:
- Minnesota Wildflowers [www.minnesotawildflowers.info](http://www.minnesotawildflowers.info)
- Biota of North America Program [www.bonap.org](http://www.bonap.org)
- USDA Plants Database [https://plants.usda.gov/home](https://plants.usda.gov/home)
Public Education and Outreach Campaign

Individual Resident Support:
- 2,000 Spring 2023 grantees were notified of their selection on February 3rd

Demonstration Neighborhoods
Requirements for funding:

- Maintaining projects at least 3 years
- Using locally adapted/local origin native vegetation
- Protecting projects from pesticides
- Submit before/after images, mapping project, receipts, 25% match for reimbursement

Residential Cost-Share: $350 cost share reimbursement for Spring 2023 cohort
Confirm participation in program

Plan your project
Plan your project:
Choosing project type

Four Project Types:

1) Native Pocket Plantings
   Variations:
   A. Raingardens
   B. Boulevard Plantings
   C. Lakeshore Buffer

2) Pollinator Beneficial Trees and Shrubs

3) Pollinator Lawns

4) Pollinator Meadows
1) Native Plant Pocket Planting

There's room in almost every yard for a small native plant garden.

A 10x10 garden can be enough to offer pollinator habitat throughout the year.

Starting small is often the smartest approach.
Plan your project: 
Project types

2) Pollinator Beneficial Trees and Shrubs

Trees and shrubs add another dimension to your yard and garden. They can also provide:

- Early-season forage for pollinators
- Edible fruit
- Shade
- Autumn color
- Winter structure
3) Pollinator Lawns

Fine Fescues, along with low growing flowers can work together to provide a low-maintenance turf alternative that supports native bees.
4) Pollinator Meadow

A large planting of diverse and native plants can be created all at once, or you can start with a small garden and expand it every year.

Especially in a larger garden, it is good to have a strong mix of grasses and flowers. Native grasses provide many benefits, not least being the number of pollinator species that nest in them or feed on them in their larval states.
Plan your project: Design Elements

• You may want to incorporate more elements into your project; stones, and other edging materials look nice and can help frame your garden.

• Mulch and edging are eligible project expenses.
Plan your project:
Choosing Plant Species

- How much sunlight is there?
- What is the soil moisture of the site?
- Do you have blooming flowers throughout the growing season (3 species in spring, summer, and fall)?

Find plant lists at https://bluethumb.org/public-resources/
Plan your project: Garden Layout

- Mixture of grasses, flowers, and shrubs
- Keep species together in groups: easier for you to identify and maintain, and for bees to find!
- Put shorter plants in “front”
Basic steps to a successful grant project:

- Confirm participation in program
- Plan your project
- Install your project
Install your project: Prepare your project site

- Remove sod
- Turn, loosen and rake soil
- Use mulch and/or other weed suppression practice (no chemicals)
- We recommend mulching your new garden
Other options:

- **“Sheet mulch”** with a layer of cardboard covered with mulch to suffocate the grass beneath.
- **“Solarize”** the area by covering it in a clear plastic sheet for a couple of months
  - only works in the sun
- Learn about these site preparation methods and more with the Xerces Society guide to Organic Site Preparation
Install your project:
Native Pocket Plantings

- Lay out the plants before you put them in the ground so that you’re happy with their spacing.
- Protect soil from erosion
Install your project:
Trees and Shrubs

- Dig a hole as deep and at least twice as wide as the root ball
- Straighten, cut, or remove circling roots
- Place tree in hole at appropriate height (root flare or top root should be at or slightly above ground level) and straighten the tree
- Gently but firmly backfill hole, watering periodically to reduce air pockets
Install your project:
Pollinator Lawns

Basic Example and Instructions
*If the lawn doesn’t have a bunch of creeping charlie or other aggressive invasives that will spread, this method may be right for you:

1. Mow lawn as short as possible.
2. Rake clippings to expose as much soil as possible.

For seeding rates and more options and information see [www.bluethumb.org/turf-alternatives](http://www.bluethumb.org/turf-alternatives)
3. **Spread seed.** Compost or sand make good bulking agents.
4. **Keep moist** until sprouting, and then cut back on watering and stop fertilizing.
5. Maintenance: **Never again mow below 3 inches.** Trim in the fall. Herbicides will kill your flowers, so hand weed.

For seeding rates and more options and information see [www.bluethumb.org/turf-alternatives](http://www.bluethumb.org/turf-alternatives)
Install your project: Pollinator Meadow

Bit-by-bit: Multiple pocket plantings side by side and over time.

All at once:

- Use smaller plants (plugs) and/or seed, to cover more area for the same cost.
- Check with the supplier of your native seeds or seed mixes for specific planting instructions.
  - Some seeds are best sown in the fall
  - Most plantings grown from seed will take at least 3 years before they are even close to establishment
- Protect against erosion
- Get some friends to help out
Maintain your project: Plant Establishment

- Water during dry periods – at least 1” per week for the first year.
- Pull weeds! Get them while they are small
- Keep plantings clear of debris
- Replace mulch and plants as needed

Which one of these would you rather pull?

Photo Credits: Lake Country Calendar, Metro Blooms, MDC Discover Nature
Lawns to Legumes

Grant Basics

Basic steps to a successful grant project:

- Confirm participation in program
- Plan your project
- Install your project
- Resources to help
- Submit your reimbursement request
Online Resources: *Planting Guides + Plant Lists*

Visit Blue Thumb’s Resources webpage at [https://bluethumb.org/public-resources/](https://bluethumb.org/public-resources/)

Your go-to page for:
- plant lists
- design templates
- project guides
Online Resources: Planting Guides + Plant Lists

Visit Blue Thumb’s Resources webpage at https://bluethumb.org/public-resources/

Make sure to download the Planting for Pollinators Design Guide!!

- VERY thorough project guide made for L2L grantees!
Online Resources: Planting Guides

https://bluethumb.org/lawns-to-legumes/

Check out the DIY Planting Guide and Grantee Guide on Blue Thumb’s L2L webpage for project guidance!
**Online Resources: Native Nurseries**

Download the **Native Plants Nurseries & Retailers List** on the DIY Planting Guide webpage!

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**Step 2: Plan**

Choose a project type and location. What project type best suits your goals and space?

- Pocket Planting
- Pollinator Lawns
- Pollinator Meadows
- Trees and Shrubs
- Shoreline Stabilization

Next, choose your plants and other materials. To choose your plants, check out our Resources page for plant lists and design guides. Try out our Plant Finder tool to search for plants based on color, bloom months, light and soil moisture requirements, and more.

Then, find a source to purchase plants and materials. If you need help, this Native Plants Nurseries & Retailers List may be helpful.

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[https://bluethumb.org/lawns-to-legumes/plant-for-pollinators/](https://bluethumb.org/lawns-to-legumes/plant-for-pollinators/)
Online Resources: Workshops

Go to https://bluethumb.org/events/ to access the FREE Resilient Yards Online Learning Series or to sign up for a live workshop!

Workshops & Events

Fill out the form below to gain immediate access to our Resilient Yards Online Learning Series, FREE to all Minnesota residents. The series contains two courses: Resilient Yards and Turf Alternatives.

Both courses contain video lessons written and delivered by experts in the field and numerous do-it-yourself resources that will guide you through each step of your own planting project.

If you find yourself wanting to take the next step after completing these courses, we recommend that you sign-up for one of our live workshops, which you can learn more about below. Our current workshop topics are Resilient Yards and Turf Alternatives—we are looking to add Pollinator Plantings and Resilient Shorelines soon! All workshop registrants are automatically enrolled in the Resilient Yard Online Learning Series as well.

We will be gradually adding new live workshop dates to our calendar throughout the spring, so make sure to check back for updates!
New Resource: The Hive!

All grantees will have access to "The Hive"! A new community platform for grantees to connect.

- Connect with each other in your region's “space”!
- Share resources, get answers from coaches, and get program updates from L2L staff
Lawns to Legumes
*Grant Basics*

**Basic steps to a successful grant project:**

- Confirm participation in program
- Plan your project
- Install your project
- Resources to help
- Submit your reimbursement request
Reimbursements

When you have completed your planting project, make sure to map your project and submit a reimbursement request!

https://bluethumb.org/lawns-to-legumes/grantee-guide/request-reimbursement/
Eligible Expenses

- Native plants, trees and shrubs or bee lawn seed (at least 70% project costs)
- Wood mulch, compost, edging
- Delivery fees
- Contractor installation or DIY equipment rental
- Renters Only: Planters or raised bed materials (up to $100).

Receipts must be legible and show that you’ve purchased items that are eligible for reimbursement after February 3rd, 2023.

You can find a list of reimbursable vegetation and expenses on Blue Thumb’s Grantee Guide webpage.
Grantees must provide a 25% match to whatever amount of funding they request reimbursed.

For a full $350 reimbursement, they must provide at least $87.50 in match in eligible expenses.

Grantees can provide that match through:

- the documentation of extra eligible expenses
- the documentation of time spent planning, planting, and maintaining your project, with each hour valued at $25.
  - Or some mix of the two options

On the reimbursement form, you can submit additional receipts and/or note the dates and approximate hours you spent working on the project.
Take before and after pictures

**Before Pictures**

- 2-4 simple shots from far enough away to establish some context
- Make a note of where you took the pictures from, you can even mark it on your site plan
- After snow melts

**After Pictures**

- Try to take them from the same general location and vantage point as your “before” pictures so they are easy to compare
- Your project might not be “beautiful” yet, we just need to see the components of your project you are asking to be reimbursed (plants, seeded area or sprouting seeds, other eligible materials).
Timeline
Lawns to Legumes Grant Program 2023

- **February 3rd:** 2,000 Spring Cohort grantees selected and notified
- Grantees attend workshops/webinars
  - March 7th, 6-8pm: *Resilient Shorelines*
  - March 14th, 12-1pm: *Resilient Yards*
  - March 21st, 6-7:30pm: *Turf Alternatives*
- Coach matching by **March 3**
- **Visit native nurseries** online and in person.
  - Site Prep
  - Planting Season
- **July 15th, 2023:** Project deadline, all reimbursements and supporting documents due
- Following reimbursement submission, we’ll send you an L2L yard sign
Time for questions!
Lawns to Legumes: You Can Bee the Change