

Lawns to Legumes Eligible Expenses Guide

Updated for Spring 2025

The Lawns to Legumes program has requirements on the types of purchases that can be eligible for reimbursement. Refer to the guide below when purchasing native plants and materials for your pollinator habitat project. If you have any questions about whether a purchase is reimbursable, please email the [L2L Helpline](mailto:121help@bluethumb.org) (121help@bluethumb.org). Refer to the [Lawns to Legumes Participant Agreements](#) for additional grant commitments.

You can view a webpage version of the Eligible Expenses guide at bluethumb.org/lawns-to-legumes/eligible-expenses-guide/.

Native Plants and Seeds

To make the biggest impact for pollinators, Minnesota native plants and seeds should be the primary focus of your project. **To be reimbursed, your project must involve the addition of new native plants within the grant period.** Non-native plants, hybrids, and cultivars are not reimbursable.

Eligible Minnesota native plants and seeds include:

- flowers/forbs
- bare root plants
- grasses, sedges, and ferns
- trees and shrubs
- seeds

All-Season Blooms: Try to incorporate at least three plant species that bloom during spring, summer and fall, with higher diversity strongly encouraged.

Source Local: When possible, buy native plants and seeds from within 175 miles of project location.

Avoid purchasing plants treated with neonicotinoids/systemic pesticides. Before purchasing plants, check with your vendor to ensure that their plants are neonicotinoid-free.

Other Project Expenses

Depending on the needs of your project, the following eligible materials can help your planting be successful. Remember to keep native plants the focus of your project.*

- Mulch (non-dyed preferred)
- Compost
- Edging (non-plastic preferred)
- Fencing for herbivore protection material (Chicken wire and stakes, mesh baskets, etc. Repellants are not reimbursable.)
- Stake for your L2L yard sign
- Plant markers/labels for identification
- Equipment rental fees
- Delivery fees
- Blue Thumb/Metro Blooms workshops
- For raised bed and container gardens: soil**, containers, planters, and raised bed materials up to \$100)

If Needed

If you are a beginning gardener or dealing with a special project site, these eligible purchases may be helpful to you only if needed.

- Gardening equipment purchases that total up to, but no more than \$50 (trowels, gloves, etc.)
- Sheet mulching materials including cardboard or other wood fiber-based products
- Biodegradable weed suppression material including paper-based landscaping fabric and stakes (plastic-based products are not reimbursable)
- Hiring helpers or consultation, design, or installation help. All contracted work must be through the current grant period to be eligible for reimbursement.
 - Use the [Blue Thumb Partner Finder](#) to find services near you!
 - For hiring helpers (family, neighbors, etc.), you can use our [cash receipt template](#) to make a receipt.

** BlueThumb/MN BWSR has the right to refuse reimbursement if it is clear that project funds were not used for the primary purpose of creating native pollinator habitat.*

*** Soil is not an eligible expense for projects that don't involve containers, as native plants can be selected for a wide range of soils in Minnesota. Dry prairie plants are well adapted to sandy, nutrient poor soils.*

Cultivars and Non-Native Plants

Non-native cultivars, “nativars,” hybrids and annuals are not eligible for reimbursement, except for the exceptions listed below. For more guidance, [this handout](#) provides tips for identifying whether a plant is native or a cultivar.

Cultivar and Non-Native Exceptions

Lawns to Legumes provides reimbursement for several non-native and cultivar plants due to their functionality in pollinator lawns, adaptability to Minnesota’s climate, or benefit to pollinators. If you are not sure whether a plant is eligible for reimbursement, please email the [L2L Helpline](mailto:L2L_Helpline) (L2lhelp@bluethumb.org).

Common Name	Scientific Name	Reason for Exception
Fescue grasses	All <i>Festuca</i> species	Pollinator lawn species
Self-heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Pollinator lawn species
Yaak yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i> var. 'yaak'	Pollinator lawn species
White clover (Dutch White Clover, microclover)	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	Pollinator lawn species
Serviceberry tree	All <i>Amelanchier</i> species	Beneficial for pollinators
Hawthorn tree	All <i>Crataegus</i> species	Beneficial for pollinators
Black chokeberry	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	Beneficial for pollinators
Prairie Crabapple	<i>Malus ioensis</i>	Beneficial for pollinators

**Non-native creeping thyme seeds may be reimbursed if they are part of a pollinator lawn seed mix or as an element of a pollinator lawn for areas with sandy soil. If you do not have primarily sandy soil, we recommend the alternatives above. Please email the L2L Helpline if you have questions about using creeping thyme for your pollinator lawn project.*

Time Requirement

Grantees are expected to spend at least 2 hours of time on their projects. This includes time spent watching the L2L Kick-Off Webinar and planning. You will need to share the total number of hours you spent on your project when filling out the [Reimbursement Request Form](#).

Reporting Additional Spending

Track the total expenses spent on your project, including any expenses beyond the amount you request reimbursement for. (This will help us demonstrate the many outcomes of the Lawns to Legumes program!) You will need to share this information when filling out the [Reimbursement Request Form](#).

Where can I purchase native plants?

The first place to look is our [Native Plant Nurseries & Retailers list](#). A number of retailers on this list offer delivery if there is not a retailer located near you. While we recommend these retailers, your purchases do not have to be limited to this list.

The [Minnesota DNR](#) has a list of native plant vendors (it is important to check with any vendor to ensure that their plants are neonicotinoid free). [The Wild Ones Chapters of Minnesota](#) also have a list of native plant vendors.

When can I start making purchases?

You can start making purchases for your Lawns to Legumes project anytime after filling out the [Grant Confirmation Form](#). Lawns to Legumes can only reimburse eligible purchases made after the date of grant confirmation and before the project deadline.

Requesting Reimbursement

- Once you complete your project, [submit a reimbursement request](#) by the project deadline. See Blue Thumb's [Grantee Guide](#) for your deadline and steps to get started on your project.
- Prepare your materials: To submit a reimbursement request, you'll need before and after photos of your project area, itemized receipts, project size information, and documentation of the time and money spent on your project. Review what you'll need on the [Grantee Guide](#).
 - *For vendors/services that don't have receipts, you can use our [cash receipt template](#)!
- Please be patient as we go through reimbursement requests. Our team individually reviews each request.