

Lawns to Legumes Fall 2025 Kick-Off Webinar Transcript

Welcome to our Kickoff Webinar, for the Lawns to Legumes fall grant season, and we're excited to have you. Just a few housekeeping items before we dive into the webinar.

If you have questions throughout the presentation, please use the Q&A feature that's located on the bottom of your screen. You just click that Q&A button you can type in your question and then hit send.

You can also upvote other questions from other participants by clicking the thumbs up icon next to each question, and that's helpful to us, because it prioritizes the most popular questions.

We won't be saving time at the end to answer questions here, but we will be having a separate Q&A session next Monday. So if your question is not answered by our content today, or it's not answered by our staff in the Q&A Will be addressing those most popular questions during that Q&A session next Monday.

Both this Kickoff Webinar, and next week's Q&A session will be recorded and then emailed to you. It'll also be posted on our grantee guide on [bluethumb.org](https://www.bluethumb.org), too, if you have to miss any part of this.

So let's begin by introducing ourselves. There are several different organizations that are involved in coordinating the Lawns to Legumes program. The Lawns to Legumes program is a program of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, which is a state agency, and they focus on helping landowners enhance conservation practices on their lands.

And then the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources contracts with Blue Thumb to help manage this grant program, and Blue Thumb is a statewide partnership, helping people reduce runoff and improve water quality and support pollinators. And most of the emails you'll be receiving will be coming from Blue Thumb.

And then, lastly, Blue Thumb is the education program of Metro Blooms, which is a nonprofit based in Minneapolis that partners with communities to create resilient landscapes and foster clean watersheds. So while our staff are coming from all these organizations we are all working together here on Lawns to Legumes.

For today's presenters. I'll start by introducing myself. My name is Megan Reich. I'm on Metro Bloom's education team, and I help a lot with Lawns to Legume's administration and communications, and I will pass it on to Alexandra.

Hi! All! My name is Alexandra Zerzan. I am also on the education team with Megan at Metro booms Blue Thumb, and help administer the lawns to legumes program with her, and I will go ahead and stop myself there and pass it on to Dan.

Alright! Thanks, Megan. I'm Dan Shaw with the Minnesota Board of Water and Solar Resources. I'm a senior ecologist and worked on developing this program.

Alright. I think I'm passing it to you, Dan.

Okay, thanks, Megan. Just want to thank everybody for joining tonight. And you're interested in protecting pollinators. The lawns and legumes program has an overall goal of building a movement to protect Minnesota's pollinators. This program started back in . We had initial funding from the LCCMR. That's the lottery funds from the State through the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. And then, more recently, through Minnesota's General Fund.

This program has a focus on supporting pollinators that are at risk through habitat projects on residential landscapes across the State. We focus a lot on the rusty patch bumblebee. We'll be talking about that species a little more coming up, but really trying to support a wide range of pollinators.

When we created this program, we really wanted to have as much impact for pollinators as we could. And so we created it with different components.

First, Pollinator Pathways. These were larger grants that go out to local communities to build pollinator corridors.

The second component involves individual support grants. This is the part of the program that you're participating in. So there's up to \$ of cost share grants. But then also technical assistance through this program, through educational workshops and coaches that are assisting.

And then our third component are technical resources that we're developing for lawn legumes that are being used by a lot of people around the State. This includes habitat guides, plant lists, design templates, and many other resources.

We want to spend a little time talking about native plants because we do focus on native plants with this program. One of the key benefits is that our pollinators have adapted over time to our native plants. So these are plants that are going to provide the highest benefit for pollinators. I can go to the next slide.

And the ecological community is very concerned about declines of pollinators. It's estimated that more than 40% of insect species across the world are in decline. We're seeing declines in the United States with bee species and also butterfly species.

And insects really make up the base of our food web. So many types of organisms, like bird species, rely on insects, and as insects decline, we see declines in other species. And it's our native plants that are really helping to support these insect populations.

Next slide I mentioned the State Bee of Minnesota, the rusty patch bumblebee. This bee has declined about 80% over the last 20 years. It was listed as endangered in 2017, and then named as Minnesota State Bee. In , we have around 500 species of native bees in Minnesota, and the needs of the rusty patch bumblebee are similar to many of our other pollinators. They need nesting areas and shelter.

They need blooming native flowers throughout the growing season as a food source. They also need protection from chemicals, insecticides, and fungicides. And then they need connected high quality habitat to increase foraging and reproductive success.

And there's many other benefits of native plants in our landscapes. They support soil, health, so the life of our soils really rely on these plants. They also stabilize soils. They increase water capture through their deep root systems. That's shown on the right side of this slide. Some of the root systems of prairie plants are going down to feet, so they're helping pull water down.

These plants also provide food for pollinators and other wildlife create overall wildlife habitat. They're very resilient to drought and environmental changes so they can handle some of the difficult conditions that we've had recently. And then they also beautify our communities.

We want to talk a little bit about cultivars because we focus on reimbursing for native plants through this program. Cultivars, nativars, and hybrids are plants that are genetically modified for aesthetics or other traits, and this quite often limits their benefits for pollinators, so they're not reimbursed by the lawns and legumes program with identifying cultivars. Cultivars usually have single quotes around their name. Hybrids will have an X in their name and then check for whimsical names as well. That's an indication of a cultivar. We really recommend shopping at native plant nurseries, and we do have resources to help direct you to native plant nurseries through this program because they will have the native plants that we're reimbursing for. There's a couple of examples here of cultivars and hybrids. There's a Gallardia species which has single quotes around the name, indicating a cultivar spintop, orange halo. So the whimsical name, and then a species with an X in the

name, which would be a hybrid, and then on the right side of this slide is showing a native plant name, butterfly, weed, or butterfly milkweed, which the scientific name is *Asclepius Tuberosa*, and then the example on the right is a cultivar. so you can see the the whimsical name of that plant species. So we'll talk more about this topic a little bit later in this presentation.

Okay, thanks, Dan. Now, we're going to spend some time walking through what you will need to do to complete a successful pollinator habitat project and the types of projects that are available to you with your Lawns to Legumes grant.

So the very first step you'll need to take if you haven't already is to accept your grant award, and you can do that by filling out the confirmation form that's linked in your award email. If you're watching this webinar. It's probably likely that you accepted the grant already, but maybe you didn't. The deadline for that is tomorrow. So please do so. If you decide that you want to accept your grant and move forward with your projects.

So going into project types, there are project types that are associated with monster legumes that you can do with your reimbursement. These include pocket plantings, and there's a few different variations that we'll talk about pollinator beneficial trees and shrubs, pollinator meadows. Container gardens and pollinator lawns, and you are welcome to do a combination of any of these types as well. We'll go into a quick overview of each project type. Here.

Native pocket plantings are a word for just a small garden bed that can come in a variety of shapes and sizes. It could even be a rain garden, and it could be anywhere in your yard, your front yard, your backyard, maybe even your boulevard, the strip between your sidewalk and the street, or you could choose to do a small planting near your lake or a river that would be considered a shoreline planting and really, what's important, with the pocket plantings here is to start small and even a small planting something as small as a few feet by a few feet is going to make a difference for pollinators. Lawn slugams doesn't have a minimum size requirement. And it's really interesting what people come up with, even if they're working with a very small space and pocket plantings are our most popular type for our lawn slogans, grantees.

Pollinator beneficial trees and shrubs are probably our second most popular project type. Many native trees and shrubs are a really great early spring food source for pollinators with early spring blossoms. When you have those queen bumblebees and other native bees just coming out from hibernation and looking for some food.

Trees and shrubs are also great, because many serve as host plants and shelter for other pollinators and insects, including moths and butterflies, and then other considerations that

you might think about with the tree planting is, maybe you want to choose a native tree that has some edible fruit like a serviceberry. and then trees are great for just providing shade. If you need some more shade in your yard. Autumn color. Just some added winter interest in your space as well.

Pollinator meadows are the term we use for essentially a larger version of a native pocket planting. We define them as expansive areas with diverse native plant species. So if you're in a rural area or just have more space to work with, these are going to be your most beneficial choice for supporting as many pollinators as possible. If you do have the time and space for that pollinator meadows are going to have a mix of native grasses and flowers and native grasses can provide as many benefits as our flowers for our pollinator species.

If you're working with a larger area. It's often easier to start a pollinator meadow from seed, or you might want to start with a pocket garden this fall and then gradually add on to it over the seasons, and eventually create a meadow that takes up your whole yard. But again, thinking about your capacity and starting with where you're at. It's okay to start small.

And then we have container gardens. This is a great option. If you live in an apartment and have a patio, or maybe don't have a lot of grounds that you could do digging in. You can still help pollinators by planting native plants and pots in your balcony, or maybe a small raised bed.

And with proper care native plants can thrive in these settings. And we have some resources on our website for that. If you're curious to learn more. And then, lastly, we have pollinator lawns. So a pollinator lawn is an area of low growing flowers. It's typically a mix of low growing fescue, grasses and pollinator beneficial flowering species. Fescues are more deep rooted compared to turf grass, so they require less water, and they're more resilient. So if you have a section of your yard that you want to keep very low growing, and you don't want taller plants. A pollinator lawn can be a good option.

So let's talk about choosing what plants you want to include in your projects, which is probably the one of the main pieces of your project planning. So the key to successful plant selection is choosing plants that are going to thrive in the specific environmental conditions in your site.

So we have some questions here that you might consider how much sunlight is in the space. Is it shady all day? Do you have a few hours of sunlight, or is it always sunny? What is the soil moisture of the site? Is it generally wet, or is it typically quite dry? Some native plants are going to thrive in full sun, while others thrive in more shady conditions.

And then, considering native grasses and sedges like I mentioned earlier, they can be really important for making sure that there's habitat and overwintering space for insects and

pollinators, and they also just support our flowering species as they grow and get taller, too. So that's something to consider incorporating.

And then we have a variety of tools on the Blue Thumb website that you can use for searching for plants, and we'll go over those in more detail later. But just noting that now and then something that I forgot to mention earlier, which is very important is making sure that you have blooming flowers throughout the growing season. So we have a lot of native plants here that bloom in summer, but also make sure that you're choosing some plants that bloom in spring and some that bloom in fall, so that there's going to be food and resources all growing season for our pollinators.

Thinking about garden layouts, and where to place your plants again. Try to go for a mixture of grasses, flowers, and shrubs. Taller native plants sometimes get luggy and want to flop over. So providing structure with grasses is good. Sedges are also great for that, and are low growing so it could be a good fit for a smaller garden.

Keeping species grouped together makes it easier to identify them, especially when they're still small. So planting in groups of threes or fours or fives. That also makes it easier for bees on other pollinators when they're foraging and looking for the flowers that they want to hang around.

Putting shorter plants in front in terms of where you're viewing the space. So you can think about it like a family photo. Small, short people in the front, tall in the back. And then we. Lastly, we have a number of example. Design templates on our resources page, and that can be a really good tool for getting a sense of of how you want to place your plants in your space.

And then some more thoughts on design. Thoughtful design can help your pollinator planting look as intentional as possible. One criticism that is sometimes shared in terms of native plants is that they can look messy, but that doesn't have to be the case. Good design can help communicate your intention to neighbors and passersby that you're trying to provide habitat for bees and butterflies, and perhaps you'll encourage others to do that in the process. So one easy design tip is to mulch your planting.

Not only does this keep your plants unique, but it also helps your new plants by retaining water and suppressing weeds. Edging is another good idea. You can use materials like bricks or stones. Woods. Would that helps frame your garden. And then, if you want, you could also think about adding plant identification tags both to help you keep track of your plants and to add an educational component to your yard, and then, finally, if you do end up completing a project, we'll be mailing you along to legumes yard sign that you can put up to help convey what your planting is doing, and all of these things we like to call queues

to care so that you can again let people know about what you're doing and also enjoy the aesthetics and beauty of your garden.

So I think I'm gonna pass things over to Alexandra, now. Yeah, thank you, Megan. So the next part we're gonna talk a little bit about is installing your project. We'll go ahead and go to the next slide, please.

So the first step to after you've planned out your project. But the first step to any installation is site preparation. And honestly, this is I think, probably one of the most important steps and one of the most important steps to get right and to do right, because how well you prepare your site before you put in your project ends up, having a pretty big impact on how successful your project is, or how easy it is to keep your projects successful. Certainly there are successful projects out there that maybe didn't have great site prep. But it may be involved weeding intensively for several growing seasons, and we don't want to have to have you do that. So start strong from the beginning. We're going to talk about a couple of different site prep. Methods, including removing sod. But one of the most important things that I already actually saw come up in the in the Q. And a, too, is anytime you're doing a planting, especially digging more than like an inch deep. You want to have your public utilities marked by gopher state one. So this is going to be really important. If you're planning something like a rain garden or a tree or shrub planting.

You need to contact. Gopher state one. It's usually about two business days beforehand. So if you're planning on doing a planting over the weekend plan to put in your ticket for them to come out and mark your utilities sometime like Wednesday or earlier of the week before, and they'll come out and they'll mark all public utilities. It's really important to note. They won't mark private utilities. So things that we see around residents running into, or things like irrigation systems or sprinkler heads. If you have, say, an accessory building on your property, that electricity is being run to that from your house. People will sometimes hit the electric line, too. So just being aware of what's on your property, and trying to assess out what if there are any private utilities, is going to be important for you to do once those are marked. We do recommend staying feet away from any buried lines. This is just gonna be the easiest and safest for you. You won't have to be concerned about any roots kind of digging in and developing any problems around your lines. But know that this is that's especially important for things like trees and shrubs that have woodier roots. If you're doing a bee lawn planting, you can certainly plant fine fescue and clover over top of a utility line. That won't be a problem.

Another consideration when you're doing your site. Prep. Is for things like your city ordinances that often come into play. If you're planting on a right of way. So something like a boulevard. Any boulevard plantings oftentimes will have restrictions around the height of

the plants that are on there, and it's really important for you to check your city specific guidelines. Those are often in place to

enhance traffic safety and make sure that pedestrians on the sidewalk can be seen by traffic. So just being sure to check and make sure that you know those height restrictions and are staying within those is going to be really important to make sure that the city doesn't cite you and have you dig up your planting.

We'll go to the next slide, Megan. So one of the most popular methods for removing sod. If you are planting in an area that already is turf grass, and you're wanting to turn that into a native planting is to manually remove the sod. This is an excellent workout, and also an excellent choice, because it gives you the ability to plant almost immediately. So you can. There's a picture here of a manual sod kicker which you can oftentimes rent from local stores or rental facilities in your area you can check with different hardware stores. They oftentimes have rentals, rental tools available, and a sod kicker is where you're doing that work manually is probably going to be the best for a smaller garden size, unless you're really willing to take on the amount of work that it's going to take to kick all those roots out, roll up that sod, and then move it aside and dispose of it appropriately.

Another option is going to be a mechanized sod cutter, which again are available to rent, and are often gas powered, and while still being a lot of work, or a little bit less work than than kicking all the sod out of the way. Once you've got that sod rolled up. If it's in good shape, you can use that to create a berm in your yard, you can compost it. You can offer it up to any neighbors who are looking to replace some patchy areas of their turf. But the important thing is just to check. If you have city pickup or yardway sites, some of them won't take sod rolls, so just know that that can be a bit of a puzzle that you might want to figure out before you have a bunch of sod to get rid of. Sitting on your lawn once you've kicked off that sod. It's a really great idea to turn, loosen and rake the soil. This is really because any area that's been turf grass for very long ends up being pretty compacted. Those roots are pretty short, and so they're not doing a lot of work to open up the the soil underneath, so loosening a little bit is just going to help decompact the soil and then raking it back into place just to level it out.

Once you've done that you're going to want to apply mulch as soon as possible.

Rain events have a huge impact on compacting soil, walking on soil obviously compacts it as well. So, placing a good thick layer a couple inches deep of mulch is going to help protect that work that you just did in turning and loosening that soil.

We recommend using a shredded hardwood mulch which is sometimes called different things. But you can usually tell, looking at the mulch, it's not chips. It's not big bark chunks, it's pretty fibrous, and the reason it's so great is because those fibers are actually going to help lock together and keep the mulch in place.

This ends up being important all the time. If you want your mulch to stay where you put it, but especially important in rain gardens or areas that experience water pooling because things like bark chips or like chunky mulches, they end up floating and can float away, and then you'll have to replace it much more frequently, and it's not doing its job of protecting the soil that way. So look for a shredded mulch blend, and once you've got that done, you'll be ready to move on to planting. Another method, though, for sod removal. That we're going to want to talk about is sheet mulching. This is a method that is a little bit less backbreaking, but a little bit more time intensive. So sheet mulching is sometimes referred to as Lasagna Mulching, or the Lasagna method is essentially blocking out the sunlight to getting to grass and suffocating it underneath. So the way that that's usually done is you cut down as much of your grass or vegetation underneath as possible you lay a layer of cardboard, and then mulch on top of it.

There are some different methods that might also have you place compost underneath. You can add amendments to like compost underneath, which will kind of kick start the microbes in the soil to help break down any of that decaying vegetation underneath and break down that cardboard. Sometimes people will build this up to make a thicker bed as well, adding compost on top and multiple layers of cardboard things like that. You can find so much information about this method in either the Xerxes Society Guide to organic site preparation or just online. There are a lot of really great like explanations and tutorials for this method. It's been used a lot.

It does take several weeks, though, for it to suffocate that those the turf grass underneath. So you want to do this early on to prepare your site. Give it a couple of weeks, just sitting there with the mulch on top, and then plant into it later.

when you are ready to plant. Most important thing to know is that you don't want to plant your new pots into the mulch. You want to pull that mulch aside. Make sure you're getting through the cardboard and getting those roots in the soil, and once they're tucked into the soil you've got it tucked in nice and tight, so something can't just come around and pull it out. You can pull that mulch back in, and it's going to be a really excellent way to get your

planting started that mulch and that cardboard layer will also help suppress weeds for the first growing season or .

The other picture that's in here right now is with the plastic on top is a solarizing method. We actually don't recommend this method, for the lance legumes grants necessarily because it takes a lot longer than the project, timeline, but it's especially not great for fall projects, because it's most effective with sun and direct sun for several months, oftentimes for a full growing season. If you have aggressive weeds underneath there. So because we're sort of halfway through the summer, halfway through Minnesota's growing season, we have no idea what the rest of the year might hold for us, we would highly recommend you avoid solarizing unless you've already started that process.

Yeah, you have your site prepped. You're moving on to the next really exciting step which is purchasing your native plants. Number one thing you're going to want to do is familiarize yourself with the eligible expenses, guide before you purchase any plants. The reason for that is because we are only going to reimburse Minnesota native plants, and there's really not a lot of leeway on that. The eligible expenses. Guide has a few plants listed that are exceptions to that rule, but by and large we're going to hold you to that. And this is the spot where we see the most grantees trip up or end up receiving less of their reimbursement than they thought they were going to is because they've purchased cultivars for plants that aren't native to Minnesota at all.

So to start, checking for native plants. If there's a plant you have in mind, and you don't know if it's native to Minnesota. Highly recommend looking at the Usda plants database or the Minnesota wildflowers website which are linked in the Grantee guide. These are fantastic, because if you put the plant in, especially the scientific name, it's going to come up with a listing that will either show you the range. Or if you're on the Minnesota Wildflowers website, and the plant doesn't come up at all. You know it's not a Minnesota native, and that's a pretty easy check.

Things get a little bit more confusing with things like cultivars, nativars, and hybrids, which is, we've touched on a little bit already, but it's super important that you familiarize yourself with that native plants versus cultivars handout on the grantee guide, because it gives you some examples of what you are likely to see on a plant tag that indicates something is a cultivar like, Dan said. You're looking for those whimsical names, or potentially a name like added onto the scientific name, one that we saw this season that could easily trip you up is something like alum root, Dale strain the minute you add on that Dale strain. Dale wasn't involved in the natural evolution of alum root, so you know that that's a cultivar or a native R, and it won't be eligible for reimbursement.

to make the process as easy as possible for you, you can check out the vendors on our native plant nurseries and retailers. Page. These native nurseries are really wonderful resources, because they are specifically growing Minnesota native plants to be planted. They don't want to see cultivars out there, either, and so they'll have a pretty strict kind of limit on what they grow and have available.

Some of the nurseries on that list might have other plants available, as well might be a more varied nursery, but they will be at least aware of the Lancet Legumes program and should be able to help you kind of direct you to their native section.

We run into this a lot that even though there are more native nurseries popping up all the time, either we don't know about all of them. They haven't partnered with us yet, or there might not be one close to you in your area, and if that's the case you can use some of our native plant nurseries offer shipping and delivery around the State, which is a really excellent way to get plants delivered to your door.

You can also purchase plants from any nursery. You're just going to want to be more diligent about that hybrids, cultivars, rule. There was one other thing I wanted to mention about this, and it's just that in the fall there are going to be plenty of native plants available.

but there is still a huge demand for native plants. So we do recommend, probably not waiting until the last minute. If you have some specific plants that you want and getting those plant orders in some of our native plant nurseries are they kind of grow based on demand, and so they'll take pre-orders now, and they'll be growing those to be ready to pick up later. So just something to know if there's a specific plant you have in mind. You want your garden.

We'll go to the next slide, which is just really quickly. Now you've got your plants you're ready to install. I am not going to walk you through each individual step for installing your projects, because we have some excellent expert presenters who are going to be doing some project webinars in the upcoming weeks. So what I'm going to give you right now is just like the down and dirty, quick version of actually putting plants in the ground.

But first I'm going to start with. Why, plant the fall? You've honestly, you're choosing a fantastic, you guys are so lucky to be planting in the fall and having the grant in the fall. I know it's less common. People are a little bit less familiar with planting in the fall, but putting native plants in in the fall gives them an excellent head start to next spring. They'll end up focusing most of their energy on their roots and getting a really strong foundation to come back even stronger next year.

In the fall we're starting to see fewer days of those really high temperatures which stress plants. So, having those cooler days is actually like triggering the plants to focus on their

roots, and they just won't have to deal with so much of that heat stress. We also start to see hopefully, continue to see plenty of rain, so that they're getting enough water.

But even if we don't, even if we enter into a drought, you don't have as much time that you need to be getting up every morning and making sure those plants are getting enough water. We do continue to recommend watering your plants through until essentially the frost, the first frost, or like frost in the ground.

But that obviously won't be as long as if you had planted back in May, and you had to water all the way through until that same time. So it's a little bit easier maintenance wise for you. The planting season for Minnesota in the fall typically runs through early October.

You want to give those plants a good 10 weeks before the first expected frost, just to develop and get strong enough to handle that. And we typically, say, starting in late August, there was a question already about purchasing plants now, or planting now. Yes, you certainly can. Our teams are often planting all of the time, all growing season long, but you're just going to have to be a little bit more diligent about making sure that those plants get enough water.

So if you're working on a native pocket planting, we've kind of already covered what it would take to remove any sod and how to prep the site that way, and making sure that you apply mulch first before putting your plants in quick note, you want to avoid doing any really deep tilling, you really don't need to do much more loosening of the soil than like.

We often go about 6 inches or so, like the depth of a pitchfork or so. because doing that will actually break up a lot of the soil microbes, and that, like microbial communities in the soil that are already doing already doing really great work. So don't bring up weed seeds. Don't break that healthy soil up. That's a little bit deeper. The native plants will will work with those communities over time and continue to improve the soil texture.

You've got your mulch laid down next step. You've got your plants rather than putting them in the ground one by one. We do recommend laying them all out so you can see that they cover the full area that you had planned. You can see if there are any holes you can adjust your design, template before you commit to getting them in the ground.

and just like I had mentioned with that sheet mulching. You want to make sure that when you're when you've already applied Mulch first you're pulling that mulch back, planting those little plugs or potted plants into the soil, green side up, and just as deep as they were in the pot, and then bringing that mulch back around nice and snug.

I think our next one is the trees and shrubs, planting trees and shrubs is a little bit of a specialized thing. So we want to give you a couple of tips. number one with a tree in, or a

shrub that's grown in a container. You want to make sure that you're planting it to the level that it was in the container. So the depth of your hole is going to be like as deep as it is not as deep as the container, as deep as like the root ball is in the container, and then at least twice as wide.

The reason for that is because roots that give your trees and shrubs the strongest foundation to actually stay upright are the ones that go laterally as trees grow. We often say that they're going to have roots as wide as their drip line. So if you're planting a big shade tree like an oak. You're going to have a root structure around it as it matures. That's also feet wide in or wider in the ground underneath. So just making sure that you've got nice loose soil for those new roots. To start moving sideways is going to be really important

when you take the tree out of the container. If it's been grown in the container, it might have circling roots, and those roots, much like curly hair, are bound to continue circling. If you leave them untouched. So unlike with curly hair. What you can do with tree roots is what we call a box cut so essentially, you take the tree out of the container, and you cut sides off. So now that instead of being in a circle, it's in a square, you've essentially removed those roots that were accustomed to that pattern of spiraling, and they'll now grow straight out.

If you were to leave those circling roots. One. It doesn't provide a very strong foundation to just have a spiral going down into the dirt but, they can ultimately girdle or strangle the tree as it grows so really important to straighten those out and remove those.

You'll put the tree in the hole, making sure that that root flare where the tree goes out like this is at or slightly above ground level. It's that first aerial root, the first root that you see going sideways. You want that to be right at the ground level, so if your hole is too deep, make sure that you take the tree out, fill it in, and put it back in to make sure it's not too deep in the soil, and then make sure it's nice and straight. It looks good.

Gently but firmly back. Fill the hole you can water periodically to reduce air pockets, or you can kind of fill the hole, step in it to make sure that you're firming that up. Fill the hole, step on it to firm that soil up and then water, and if you're noticing that the soil is sunk, making sure that you add a bit on top just to that root flare.

Not. Lastly, but next we have the pollinator, meadow pollinator. Meadows can be really overwhelming because of their size, but they can also be really beautiful, and they provide a lot of really great habitat. So we love to see them. But if you are a beginner, gardener, or you know you have some restrictions on your time.

We recommend installing pollinator meadows bit by bit. So, starting off with a pocket planting that you know you could manage this year, and next year, maybe you collected seeds from your pocket planting, and maybe your plants are large enough to divide. You

move some plants over into the space right next to that pocket planting, and as you put them together, sort of like a quilt patchwork, you'll ultimately have a pollinator meadow in time.

If you're working with something like an acreage, or you just know that you're gonna be able to take on the the responsibility, we'll say, of installing a pollinator meadow all at once. You can do that, and oftentimes the most economical way to do that is, by purchasing either smaller plants like plugs or seed to cover more area for the same cost.

If you're seeding a project, there are a couple of things that we want to make sure that you consider. Number one is that you are aware of the process for planting the seeds to make them the most successful. So many native seed suppliers will include instructions on how to properly establish your meadow. It may include doing like a mowing in the first year, just to mow down any weeds and then letting it grow the second year to actually start to see some plant establishment. it luckily being in the fall. If any plants require stratification, or or that cold thought going through cold thaw cycles. You're well prepared planting in the fall to to set those seeds up for success.

Most plantings grown from seed will take at least years to establish, and during those years your seed planting is going to look very different. And it's important to just know that there's going to be a lot of variation over time when you're purchasing seed from a really reputable native plant nursery. They're often adding in seeds for native plants that maybe have a shorter life cycle. And so they're going to come up really fast towards the beginning to cover ground. Try to shade out some of those weeds, while some of those other plants take a little bit longer, they'll establish over a couple of years, and things will start to fluctuate, as everything evens itself out over time. So just know that you're going to be looking at a different garden every year as your project comes up.

And then, with any seeded planting. It's really important to protect against erosion. So you may be looking at using erosion control, blankets or straw something like that, and know that those protective measures are eligible for reimbursement as long as they are fully biodegradable. To make sure you're not getting any of those erosion blankets with plastic netting.

This is a really important, not important popular project, the pollinator lawns. And we are just going to go through really quickly. One scenario of installing a pollinator lawn. If you are thinking about doing a bee lawn, highly highly recommend coming to the project. Webinar specific to pollinator lawns, which will be presented by James Wolfen from Twin City Sea.

He's like one of the premier experts on B ones, and will give you tons of tips. But as just a quick reference. If you have a very healthy lawn already without a lot of weed pressure, this

process I'm going to talk through applies to you if you don't. If there is a lot of weed pressure in your lawn or you're working with a really weedy area that maybe isn't even turf grass. But you want to turn it into a lawn. You're probably going to be taking a more intensive approach. That's a little bit closer to a renovation, and this will not be a successful way to install your lawn, so just know that.

But here we go. healthy lawn. You're going to mow it as short as possible, and rake those clippings aside to expose as much of the soil as possible, which will increase the seed to soil ratio and improve your germination rates, seeding rates and things like that are going to be on your seed package, or you can find them at our website, specifically under the turf alternatives Project page. We'll go to the next slide.

which then talks about spreading the seed. Sometimes it's recommended that seed be spread with some sort of bulking agent, so compost or sand make really good bulking agents, and are eligible in that scenario. Know that topsoil is not an eligible defense, so don't use it as a bulking agent. Use compost instead.

Once the seed is on the ground, like with any seeding project. You're going to want to make sure that you're keeping it moist until the seeds sprout, and then you'll be able to slowly cut back on watering. You'll pretty much be able to stop fertilizing it altogether.

But it is really important that those seeds stay consistently moist while they are germinating. and then, once the lawn is established, you'll never again want to mow below inches, and that's just to make sure that all of those flowering species actually have enough height so that they can flower and provide forage for bees.

You may mow your bee lawn. Most people just do it in the fall. Some people do it twice a year. It's kind of up to you and your preference there, but know that you will want to hand weed and stay on top of those weeds, because applying any sort of broad herbicide will also kill the flowers in your in your planting, and are ultimately detrimental to pollinators as well.

A quick note on protecting from herbivores a lot of new young plants are particularly tasty to things like rabbits, squirrels, and deer. So we know that this is a problem and something that people want to protect their plantings, for in that especially that first growing season, so we do reimburse for herbivore protection, not repellents so physical protection, not chemical repellents.

some different options that are usually affordable are things like chicken wire that's at its largest one inch wide. Anything bigger, and things will sneak through to eat those tender plants, mesh baskets like there are often like these mesh trash baskets that you can get at

the dollar tree that have been really popular for individual plants. If your plants are kind of spread out, that's a great way to protect them.

Just know that you don't have to leave this protection up forever. It's usually that first growing season that's going to be really important to make sure that those plants ultimately establish themselves well enough that if next year they get a little bit nibbled on, they will survive and come back.

Native plants. I really like to point out if we're planting natives for pollinators. We're also planting natives for the rest of the ecosystem. So things like rabbits and deer they're a part of the natural world, and they also established, have, like evolved eating native plants that have been here for millennia. So it's good to just know that you might be planting a little bit for you and a little bit for them, and you're just going to have to give up

some of your some of your plants to the rabbits as an offering, but plant enough for everyone. If you are planting a tree or a shrub, it's also really important, especially in the wintertime, that those are

protected from, especially rabbits. In the winter rabbits will easily come and girdle a tree in the winter, and you won't know it until the snow melts. But you might not see a tree back the next year, so make sure that you're protecting them through the winter as well.

Finally maintaining your project. Know that native plants, while they don't require as much water as traditional plantings, they do still need water. So for the first entire growing season we recommend that they get at least one inch of water per week, whether that is from the sky or from a sprinkler.

We do recommend that you water for a longer amount of time, less frequently, so, making sure that water gets deep and encourages those roots to reach after the water and go deep into the ground is really important, and that whole growing season. If you plant this September that's going to be all the way through next year's frost. So just know how long that cycle it fully takes for plants to establish in that first year.

Make sure that you're getting out into your garden pulling weeds. Get them while they're small. The pictures here are actually of the same weed. It's a Siberian elm, and you certainly want to be dealing with the smallest one on the left and not the full tree that's going to require a chainsaw and stump grinding to get rid of.

Keep your plantings clear of debris trash. It looks nicer, and also, if you have a rain garden. It helps it function properly, and then replace mulch and plants as needed. It's to be expected that some plants may not survive, and so know that next year you may need to plant. Replant those. You can divide plants as they get bigger to fill in empty spaces, and

then, as your garden fully matures and is covered by the native plants. You won't need any or as much mulch, because it will be fully filled in.

I think I am handing it over now to Megan.

Yes, thank you, Alexandra. Now we are going to cover some resources that you can use to add you on your project. So bluethumb.org is our website where we house a lot of the materials that you'll be referring to.

The Grantee guide is the main page on our website. That will be most helpful for you throughout the Grant period. This is where the recording of this webinar will be posted, and we have a step by step, timeline, for everything, from planning to submitting your project for reimbursement. So when in doubt, check this page first for answers to your questions. We do also have a frequently asked questions. Section in there that's handy. If there is something in particular you're curious about check to see if it's answered there first.

And we have a project gallery which is exciting and new, where you can explore Launce Lagoon's projects and other native gardens created by other people across Minnesota. If you're just looking for ideas or inspiration.

The next one we really want to highlight here, which was mentioned earlier, is the eligible expenses. Guide, which is linked on the grantee. Guide the eligible expenses. Guide explains what plants and materials are eligible for reimbursements. Any item that is not on this list is not reimbursable under the lawn sallyums program. So be sure to review this guide before you make your purchases.

We'll be going over the details of the sky a little more shortly.

Another resource to call out again, also linked on the Grantee guide is the native Plant Nurseries list, so you are not required to buy your plants from retailers on this list, but, as mentioned, these are all partner locations with staff that are knowledgeable in the program. They either only sell native plants, or they include native plants in their inventory, and have clearly marked sections in their nursery.

If you don't have a nursery on this list near you. Many offer delivery, and that's indicated in this list. And delivery fees are a reimbursable expense. Okay, so all Louncelegans grantees have access to an online community forum which we call the hive. It's basically kind of like a Facebook group. But just for Lonstaloos participants. If you did fill out that form to accept your grant, you would have received the link to this in your follow up email, and we'll also be including the link to the hive and all of our upcoming email newsletters. This is just a great space to connect with your fellow grantees program. Staff and coaches. Do monitor

this space, too. If you have questions that you want to ask here, and we'll be posting just reminders and updates in this space as well.

If you are a first time gardener, or just wanting more detailed how to guidance on your project. As mentioned, we're offering optional project webinars for you.

Both these webinars will be recorded. But you can also attend the live sessions. The first one, which will be . About weeks from now. On Monday, July , th is our pollinator plantings, webinar and of our metro blooms. Design build staff will be covering pocket plantings, tree plantings, pollinator meadows and container plantings in a lot more detail.

And then Monday, August , th is our pollinator lawns focused. Webinar and James Wolfen from twin Cdc. Will walk through those steps in different scenarios for converting your lawn space into a pollinator lawn.

So we have a number of the plant lists. Design templates, downloadable guides, all sorts of things. They're all located on the resources page. So if you're just not sure what you want to do yet, or you're wanting like some more guidance on plant selection I recommend just poking around here in the resources. Page one thing I want to. Highlight in particular, is the planting for pollinators. Design guide, which is that circled resource right there when you go on the page. And that was made specifically for lance legumes, grantees. It covers those step-by-step installation advice for each of the main project types that we cover today.

And it's very thorough. So I recommend that if you're wanting a bit more guidance. We also have our project pages. And these are located under the Learn tab on the Blue Thumb website. Again, these kind of dive into different projects types and offer guidance from the planning to design to maintenance stages of a project for a variety of project types.

The blue thumb plant finder is a really neat search tool that helps you find Minnesota native plants best suited to your project types and your site conditions. It has a bunch of different filters that you can select? whether your yard is sunny or shady, and also things like, what color of plants do you want in your yard, or what are the heights of the plants that you want.

You can select those filters and then get a very specified search. Results of plants based on what you're looking for. It's not an exhaustive database. It has about native plants that are going to be typically available in our Minnesota native plant nurseries.

If you want to take your learning to the next level. We do have a free resilient yards Online learning series. And that has some extra videos and guidance. Blue Thumb also puts on a few in person. Workshops, and I believe we'll have a few this fall. So if you're interested in that. Those workshop fees are reimbursable, if that's something that you want to pursue

coaching. So we do have a number of fantastic volunteer coaches. Who participate in Lancelogans that we match with grantees who want some extra support.

In early August we will be emailing you an optional coaching interest survey, and you can fill that out. If you would like to be matched with a volunteer coach. We do have a limited number of coaches, so we encourage you to fill that out. If you're a first time gardener, or you don't have much experience gardening, and in terms of what you can expect from your coach, we'll help you do the initial connection. In terms of who your coach will be, and then you. Maybe their coach will be connecting with you via phone or email, and they can offer two to three hours of their time via phone zoom or email to help talk through your project with you all right. So we covered project planning installation. We went over some learning resources. And so once you are finally completed with your pollinator habitat project, you will be submitting for reimbursement.

So in around Mid August we'll be emailing you a link to a reimbursement request form, and you'll want to not fill that out until your project is complete. That means your plants are in the ground.

And, as mentioned in your award email, you can be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$400 for eligible expenses. If you did spend less, that's perfectly okay. You can request less than that.

There are 4 main things that you'll need to submit a reimbursement request. You'll need itemized receipts from your project purchases you'll need before and after photos of your project. Site. You'll need to know the approximate size of your project or projects, and then you'll need to take note of the approximate total number of hours that you spent working on your project.

Eligible expenses. So again, just reinforcing eligible expenses. Guide is a very important place to check before making purchases. The lawns of legumes program can reimburse any Minnesota native plants, trees, shrubs, and then we do reimburse bee lawn seed, which is listed in detail. What types of bee lawn flowering species we reimburse in the guide.

We do not reimburse for cultivars again. So just make sure that you review that material. On telling the difference between cultivar varieties of natives and straight native plants.

The program also reimburses mulch compost edging. It does not reimburse soil unless you're using that for a container garden only up to one-hundred dollars. Delivery fees are reimbursable. If you're hiring help like contractors to install your project or your you're paying your family member or a neighbor to help you with some labor that can be reimbursable as well. I'm not going to go over each bullet point of the guide in detail, so

again, make sure that you spend some time with that on your own. to find out whether a plant is native to Minnesota. Again, we have a couple of tools that are linked on the Grantee guide the Minnesota wildfires. Database is really easy to use. It mostly only has plants native to Minnesota. I think they do have a few that are invasive. So just check that little map of Minnesota on the side to confirm the Usda plants. Database is very comprehensive and then the Blue Thumb Plant Finder, again, has a good selection of native plants that are generally available in our State's native plant nurseries.

As you can tell, we're really wanting to make sure that you don't accidentally purchase cultivars, that you're unable to get reimbursed when you are shopping at a nursery that is on our recommended list. You can ask them if you're not sure. And if you're really in doubt about something, you can email the L2L Helpline, which is l2lhelp@bluethumb.org.

Just a few notes on what we are looking for. When you submit receipts from your projects. Launch can only reimburse purchases that were made on or after the date that you were awarded your launch to Lugans, grant, which was June sixteenth twenty twenty five.

Make sure that your receipt or your invoice invoice is legible. We can read it, and the key details we need on. There are the date of purchase the name of the retailer. The names of the items or plants you're purchasing, and the total if your receipt includes purchases that are not part of your project, that you're not requesting reimbursement for. Go ahead and just circle or highlight what you are requesting reimbursement for ideally, your receipt will be itemized and will list the name of each item or plant you purchased. But if it just shows the total or does not have the specific plant names listed on there. We ask you to also submit a photo of your plant tags, or you can submit a written or typed out list of the names of the plants that you purchased, so that we can confirm that they are Minnesota, native or otherwise, eligible for reimbursement.

for before and after photos. All we need is just a few simple shots that let us see that you completed your project. So when you do your before photos, just one to shots from far away enough to establish some context of where the project is. If you are planting in multiple areas like you've got a couple of pocket plantings, or you're doing a tree in one spot and a pocket planting in another. Just take a photo of each area you plant to plant in.

and then for your after photos, try to take the photos from the same general location and vantage point as your before pictures, so they're easy to compare your project might not be super beautiful. Yet your plants might look really tiny in the photo. That is perfectly okay. We're just looking to see that all the components of your projects that you're asking to be reimbursed for, like plants, mulch, edging, etc. Are there?

And then just make sure you're tracking your spending and time. It might be helpful to get a spreadsheet out, or just open up your notes, app on your phone, and record. You know each purchase that you have. Make sure that you're collecting your receipts in one spot, or taking photos of them right away and saving them in a place where you can find them later.

And then, in terms of time, you're expected to spend at least two hours of time on your projects. That includes time spent watching this webinar and planning. So that's gonna be probably two hours right there. But just keep general track, and then you'll share the total number of hours later on in the reimbursement request form. We do have a project tracker spreadsheet on the Grantee guide that you can download, and there's templates that you can use for keeping track of your spending and your time. Which is really handy. So take a look at that and download, that if you want some templates to work off of and stay organized more easily when you confirmed your grant, or if you haven't yet, you will see this. There's a list of participant agreements, and we have a few items on there that are strongly encouraged, but not necessarily required for reimbursement that I just want to note here one is if you can try to source your native plants from about , one-hundred seventy-five miles of your location.

just so that you can get native plants that are local to your ecotype, and are going to be most supportive to your local pollinators. If you don't have a nursery that close. That's fine. If you're like close to the Wisconsin border, and you want to get native plants from prairie nursery in Wisconsin. That's fine as long as they're Minnesota native. try to verify that your plants are free from neonicotinoids and other systemic pesticides. This is something that you can ask a nursery about if you're not sure, and please try not to apply pesticides or herbicides on your project site unless you absolutely have to, because this is going to harm pollinators, and then following through with Project maintenance, doing that weeding and watering that's going to ensure that your project is successful and that you're going to be supporting Minnesota's pollinators for years to come.

Think I'll pass it back to Alexandra to wrap things up.

Yes, and I know that we went over, and I know that it's my fault. So I'm going to try and get us through these last couple of slides. Really quick. We're just going to do a quick overview of the project, timeline and last couple of reminders. The next webinar is going to be the optional Q&A session next Monday, twenty-first and that is going to cover the questions that you put in the Q&A today we'll type those up. We'll make sure that we have answers for you, and we'll make sure that we have the questions and answers available to share with you afterwards.

Then the following Monday is the pollinator plantings Project webinar, that one's going to cover pocket plantings and pollinator and trees and shrubs and a little bit of pollinator meadows specifically, and that will be presented by a couple of our designers from Metro blooms, design and build who are really fabulous resources. So if you're considering one of those types of projects come to that webinar. And then

the Monday after that we'll be having the pollinator lawns project. Webinar, again hosted by James Wolfen from twin city seed. So if you're considering a bee lawn, please do come to that, webinar. He loves taking lots of questions and answering them rapid fire. So we'd like to see you there.

The coaching timeline. A coach interest survey is going to go out in early August, and you'll be able to express your interest in wanting to get matched with the coach, and we'll do our best to do that. Your project deadline is going to be November thirty. All your reimbursement requests must be submitted by that time. Your project needs to be in the ground. Plants in the ground, soil on the seeds on the soil for those reimbursements to come in.

If you find that you don't have enough time to finish the project, and you need a little bit more time. Please do email us at L2Lhelp@bluethumb.org to request an extension once your reimbursement has been submitted and approved. We'll send you a lawns to Legumes Yard Sign. To add to your project.

We have this great, suggested Project Timeline, and a one page checklist that can be found on the grantee guide. You by no means have to follow this exactly, but for anyone who's a little bit unsure of what this could look like over the course of the full. Grant timeline. It's going to be a really great thing to check out and keep you on track again. We hope to see you next week at the Q. And A. Session. If you find in the next week that you thought of a question that you didn't get to answer here in the Q. And a chat, please email us at the Helpline, and we'll add that to our list. Do check the frequently asked questions at the bottom of the Grantee guide. We add all of the questions that get asked in previous cohorts to that frequently asked question. So if you're asking it, it's probably been asked before that session like this. Session will be recorded. So if you can't make it, we'll send that out as well when in doubt start at the Grantee Guide. We've put so much great information there. There are so many great resources. We have tried our very best to make it as comprehensive as possible without being too overwhelming. So check that out. It will be your best friend, bookmark it, use it throughout the whole Grant season. If you're still unsure, or have you want a little bit of input, go ahead and head over to the hive. That's a really great place to get some feedback from other grantees experiencing the same kind of

project challenges. Or maybe they've they've done it before, and they've got a great answer for you. Our coaches and staff are there to support you as well.

And if you're still not getting the support that you need, email us at the Helpline. We are checking that all the time, and always ready to answer your your questions. There, I think that's the end.

And we are so appreciative of you guys being here tonight? Thank you so much for coming. We like, we said, we'll send out the recording and Hi to everyone watching this in the virtual realm in the future. We hope to see you again next week at the Q. And A. Session, or at one of the project. Webinars coming up later in a few weeks, this month, the next month.