



## SOME CALL IT A GARDEN, BUT WE CALL IT A PRAIRIE

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**<http://npsot.org>**

So you think you want to put a pocket prairie on your school campus? So romantic, vast stretches of wildflowers nodding gently in the breeze, evoking idyllic scenes of Little House on the Prairie. Laura bursts into the log cabin with an armful of fresh picked wildflowers, "Ma, look what I brought home for you!" OK, you've got the dream, now to get to work.

### **Teacher "Buy-In" and PTO volunteers**

Do the teachers on your campus really want to take the kids outside and use the garden?

Do you have enough adult volunteers to maintain your prairie garden?

Find out, before you make a move.

### **Water, water, water**

You must have a water source at your site; if not an irrigation system, at least a hose and sprinkler with a timer. Hand-carried water went out with the pioneers.

### **Prepare your ground**

No matter what advice people give you, only listen to it if they say: herbicide, wait, till/plow, wait, then herbicide some more. If you don't eradicate the Bermuda and carpet grasses from your seed bed before you plant, you will be fighting them forever! October/November is a good target time to be seeding your prairie garden.



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### **Native plants and seeds**

Use only native local seeds and plants for your pocket prairie. A good rule of thumb is to acquire plants and seeds from within a 50 mile radius of your site to maintain the genetic integrity/authenticity of your native grass and flowers. Good sources for plants and seeds local to the Houston area are: Houston Native Plant Society, Katy Prairie Conservancy, Audubon Native Nursery, Hannah Native Grasses, Inc. Many local garden clubs, such as Westbury's Bouquettes, often share plants and seeds. Also, Kolter Elementary School has been very successful and generous with sharing seeds and plants with other schools.