

Natural Landscaping for Public Officials

A Source Book

The goal of this project was to encourage the use of natural landscaping techniques by municipalities, township and county governments, park districts, forest preserve districts and other public bodies throughout the Midwestern states.

The Natural Landscaping Source Book is a manual for local public officials in the Midwest on how to encourage natural landscaping, respond to questions and issues regarding the use of these new techniques, describe management and maintenance techniques, show how natural landscaping can be aesthetically acceptable, and incorporate natural landscaping into local government programs.

The program was funded by the U.S. EPA and administered by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC). Applied Ecological Services contributed materially to the content of the book which was published in the spring of 1997. AES contributions included: "The How to of Natural Landscaping", "Case Studies", "Benefits of Natural Landscaping" and Appendix materials such as plant lists, project checklists, cost comparisons, etc.

The intended benefits are an increased use of landscaping techniques which incorporate native wildflowers and grasses, an increase in the use of construction practices that minimize adverse impacts to natural habitat, and prevention of pollution through reduced use of landscape chemicals. The techniques will also allow for integrated pest management, recycling of green waste, minimization of stormwater runoff, reduced use of fossil-fueled maintenance equipment, and improved air quality. The overall result of the use of the techniques are increased diversity in plants and wildlife, cost savings, and a healthier, more aesthetically pleasing landscape.

COST OF NATIVE VS. NON-NATIVE SPECIES FOR LANDSCAPING

Procedures & Material Site Preparation	Sodded Turf Grasses	Seeded Turf Grass	Prairie Or Wetland Seeding
Spraying ¹	\$ 140.00	\$ 140.00	\$ 140.00
Irrigation ²	\$ 1,680.00	\$1,680.00	
Top Soil ³	\$ 4,480.00	\$4,480.00	
Tilling	\$ 392.00	\$ 392.00	\$ 392.00
Sod & Installation	\$ 5,964.00		
Seed & Installation		\$1,064.00	\$1,232.00
Wild Flower Planting *			\$1,680.00*
First Year Mowing	\$ 784.00	\$ 672.00	\$ 196.00
Total Installation Per Acre	\$13,440.00	\$8,428.00	\$1,960.00 to \$3,640.00
Subsequent Annual Upkeep Per Acre ⁴	\$ 1,120.00	\$1,120.00	\$ 168.00

1. Herbicide application to eradicate undesirable vegetation such as quack grass or thistle.
2. Irrigation cost figures assume an underground automatic system.
3. Top soil is figured at approximately 3" depth hauled in from off-site.
- * Wild flower planting is optional on low profile site.
The figure is based on 1,000 seedlings installed per acre planted.
4. Annual maintenance for turf grass includes 12 mowings per/year plus fertilizer and watering. Annual maintenance for prairie/wetland grasses includes annual burns, occasional spot spraying or mowing.

