

# HOW TO LANDSCAPE WITH NATIVE SPECIES

## 6 STEPS TO A BETTER BLOOM



### 1: SITE SELECTION

Soil texture, soil moisture, and light availability are important limiting factors that determine where native plants can grow. Note your high disturbance areas, well drained soils, full sun, full shade, etc. **TEST YOUR SOIL** texture, chemistry, salinity, and organic matter. Contact your Extension Agent to walk you through the process.

### 2: BUY YOUR PLANTS

Pick out plants based on your site, soils, and landscaping goals.

**TIP:** Check species-specific needs and adaptations (soil texture and moisture, shade tolerance, conservation value, and hardiness)



### 3: PREPARE PLANTING SITES

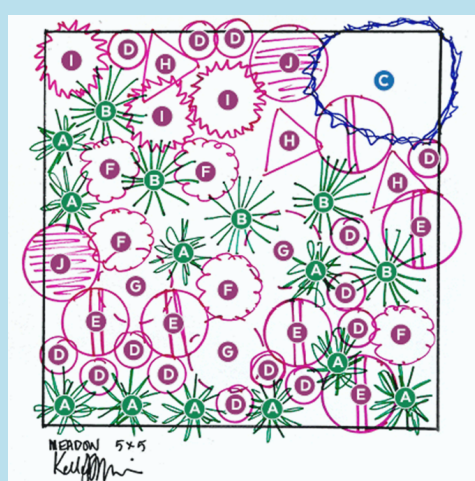
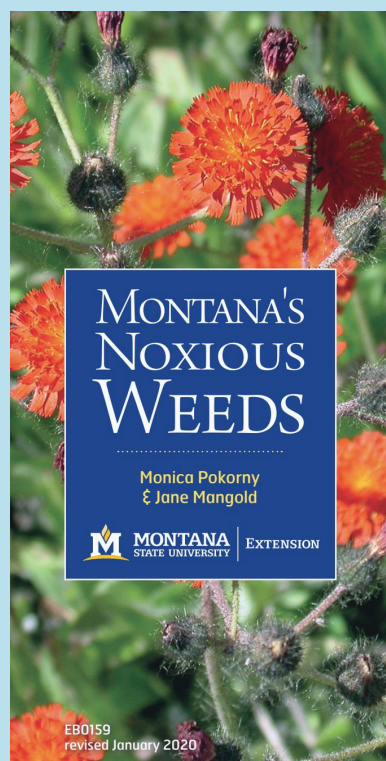
There are many different suggested methods depending on your site condition. **Smothering is the easiest method and can help with weeds.** Kill all the vegetation by covering it with cardboard and newspaper at least 6 weeks in advance. Using biodegradable materials will make it easier to plant in and ultimately add more soil to your site. Tilling is another option if you have time limitations. After planting, cover with a thick layer of mulch or woodchips.



### 4: REMOVE THE WEEDS

Identify what weeds you have to learn to best way to control them. Use a combination of the following methods: hand pulling, repeat tilling, smothering, or herbicide. The key is to stop adding to the seed bank by never allowing your weeds to go to seed. Some weeds will sprout from the roots; in this case, be sure to remove the entire root system, spot treat with herbicide that attacks the root, or smother with thick layers of mulch. **Be sure to gather all removed weed material in trash bags or burn to keep them from reestablishing.**

**TIP:** Repeat tilling method is great in weedy areas. Till to a depth of 3-4 inches. Then water the site to encourage weeds to germinate. Till again to kill the young weeds. Repeat one last time.



**MATRIX:** (A)(B) **STRUCTURE:** (C)  
**VIGNETTES:** (D)(E)(F)(H)(I)(J)

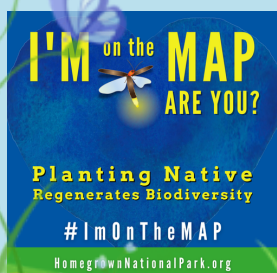
### 5: START PLANTING

Timing, soil moisture, and available sunlight are extremely important. Layering is a great way to create necessary shade, trap in moisture, and prevent weeds from establishing.

**TIP:** Organize native plant communities into three principal layers: **Matrix:** groundcover and understory plants used as mulch. **Structure:** architectural woody plants and perennials. **Vignettes:** plants with defined periods of seasonal interest and bloom at different times.

### 6: WATER, WATCH, AND WEED

Continue to monitor your new plants, watch for new pollinators, and keep on weeding.



Homegrown National Park® addresses the urgent biodiversity crisis with a simple, science-based solution to a global challenge. Become an HNP Firefly and light up the MAP.



# PLANTING TIPS

## GRASSES ~ FORBS ~ SHRUBS

### GRASSES:

If you are using plugs, plant 2 plants per square foot. If you are using a mixture of plugs and seed, plant plugs first. Space them on 12-inch centers and then scatter seed around them. You'll need 1 pound of seed per 350 square feet — more if you are planting bunchgrasses and want a thick stand right away. **Mulch with wood chips or straw. Keep the site moist.** Until seedlings establish, the seedbed should be moist but not soaked. Many factors affect the rate of germination but, in most cases, you should see seedlings in 10 to 15 days.

**TIP:** Sites high in nitrogen favor quick-growing invasive weeds and sites with low nitrogen favor slow-growing, established grasses.

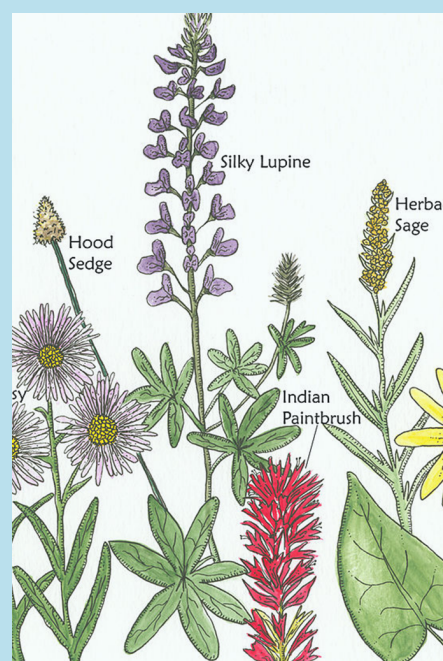


### FORBS:

Transplants do best when planted in spring or early fall. Early spring flowers often do better when transplanted in autumn. Transplants should be spaced approximately 1 foot apart. Mark each transplant at planting time, so it's easily identified. Mulching with 3 to 4 inches of wood chips or clean straw helps keep weeds down until live mulch can establish.

Choose a variety of plants that bloom from early spring into late fall to promote pollinators. Include larval host plants in your landscape. Be sure to plant in clumps, rather than single plants. Do not forget that night-blooming flowers will support moths and bats.

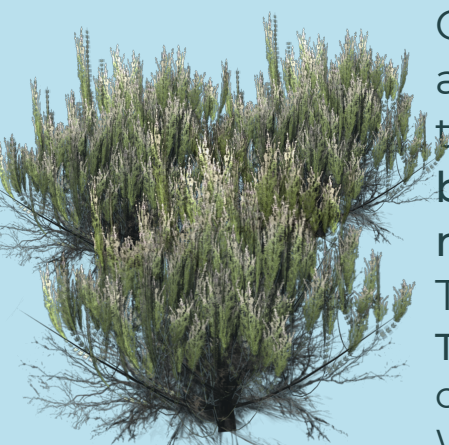
**TIP:** Eliminate pesticides and herbicides whenever possible. If you must use chemical, use the least-toxic material possible. Read labels carefully before purchasing, as many chemicals are especially dangerous for pollinators. Use the product properly.



### SHRUBS:

Container and bareroot stock of shrub seedlings are spring planted throughout Montana where there's adequate spring moisture. **Seedlings must be held in a dormant state and planted before native plants of the same species break dormancy.** Timing is species dependent, do your research!

**TIP:** Proper planting technique and root placement is critical to the long-term survival and growth of seedlings. When planting bareroot stock, the roots should be placed vertically in the planting hole and fanned out against its wall. For container stock, careful handling is advised to maintain the integrity of the soil around the root plug. Soil must be carefully compacted around root systems to eliminate air pockets without crushing the roots.



**TREES ARE TRICKY. CHECK OUR OTHER AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR SPECIES SPECIFIC PLANTING TIPS!**



[bethany@pcecmt.org](mailto:bethany@pcecmt.org)  
[abunce@freshwaterpartners.org](mailto:abunce@freshwaterpartners.org)  
[lschwartz@freshwaterpartners.org](mailto:lschwartz@freshwaterpartners.org)

