

Prairie Plant Paradise



Introduction

In "The Prairie that Nature Built", the readers are introduced to the many plants and flowers and wildlife of a prairie. This is a chance to grow some.

Materials Needed

- ◆ A copy of the book
- ◆ Large paper cups
- ◆ Soil
- ◆ Prairie seeds from a native seed catalog (try to avoid seeds that need a germinator)
- ◆ Sunny window or grow light
- ◆ Sunny garden spot to plant the seedling later

Common Core Standards (ELA K-2)

- ◆ ELA Writing: Research to Build and Support Knowledge
k.7, 1.7, 2.7 3.7

Procedure

1. Choose some prairie seeds from a catalog or website such as sunflower, milkweed, butterfly, yellow or purple coneflower, or black-eyed Susans.
2. Match the photo of the plants of the seeds from the catalog or website with the flowers in the book so you know what you are planting.
3. Get large paper cup and put some pinprick holes in the bottom.
4. Fill with soil.
5. Place one or two seeds into the dirt.
6. Water but not until sopping. Put on plate to catch water
7. Place in sun. Keep soil moist but not soggy.
8. When the plant is as tall as the paper cup is deep, then it's time to transplant them to the garden. When you do, dig a hole taller than the cup. Be careful with the roots, stretching them out a bit to see their structure. Have someone dangle the plant over the hole while someone else gently place dirt around it to fill up the hole. Pat around it.
9. Watch the plants grow.
10. Watch to see if goldfinches come to the sunflowers and monarchs to the milkweeds and coneflowers.
11. Keep a journal with weekly sketches and measurements of the seedlings and plants.
12. Watch what insects and birds come to them.



Next Generation Science Standards (K-3)

- ◆ LS1.A: Structure and Function
- ◆ LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems.

Additional Resources

- ◆ Sources for native prairie seeds: Prairie Nursery -- You can learn so much about prairies from their catalog and pick seed mixes that attract butterflies, or hummingbirds, or songbirds (<http://prairienursery.uberflip.com/i/101111>); Prairie Moon Nursery (<http://www.prairiemoon.com/seeds/>); Wildflower Farm (<http://www.wildflowerfarm.com/index.php?p=catalog&parent=27&pg=1&gclid=CKW1r7ubnLkCFepFMgodDiAAVA>)

- ◆ Get to know more about the monarch butterflies that come to your garden: <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/search/Monarch.html>; <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/search/MonarchNotes1.html#1>; <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/monarch/indexCurrent.html>