# Pollinator Food Plot

## Signature Series Food Plot Mix

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND TARGET WILDLIFE

The Pollinator Food Plot is a diverse mix of native grasses and wildflowers designed to provide excellent habitat for pollinators and great nesting and brood rearing cover for pheasants, quail and a suite of other wildlife. Species are appropriate throughout the Midwest and Great Plains states and for use on a wide variety (wet-mesic to dry-mesic) of soils.

## MIX CONTENTS (reported in #s/ac – divide by 4 for rates per bag)

Big Bluestem (0.2), Little Bluestem (0.4), Prairie Dropseed (0.02), Rough Dropseed (0.05), Sand Dropseed (0.005), Eastern gamagrass (0.1), Indiangrass (0.1), Prairie Junegrass (0.05), Sand lovegrass (0.01), Sideoats Grama (0.4), Switchgrass (0.05), New England Aster (0.01), Smooth Blue Aster (0.01), Foxglove Beardtongue (0.005), Wild Bergamot (0.01), Blanket Flower (0.15), Marsh Blazingstar (0.03), Rough Blazingstar (0.02), False Boneset (0.01), Prairie Cinquefoil (0.01), Crimson Clover (0.5), Grayheaded Coneflower (0.01), Pale Purple Coneflower (0.05), Prairie Coneflower (0.05), Purple Coneflower (0.05), Lanceleaf Coreopsis (0.05), Plains Coreopsis (0.001), Culver's Root (0.001), Evening primrose (0.02), Blue Flax (0.1), Gray Goldenrod (0.003), Showy Goldenrod (0.004), Illinois Bundleflower (0.1), Leadplant (0.02), Roundhead Lespedeza (0.04), Perennial Lupine (0.2), Canada Milkvetch (0.05), Butterfly Milkweed (0.03), Common Milkweed (0.03), Narrowleaf Mountain Mint (0.001), Obedient Plant (0.002), Partridge Pea (0.1), Purple Prairie Clover (0.06), White Prairie Clover (0.02), Seedbox (0.001), Ohio Spiderwort (0.002), False Sunflower (0.05), Maximillian Sunflower (0.05), Black-eyed Susan (0.07), Brown-eyed Susan (0.02), Thimbleweed (0.01), Showy Tick-trefoil (0.05), Blue Vervain (0.01), Hoary Vervain (0.02).

In addition, this mix includes oats as a companion crop.

## COVERAGE AND SITE PREP

Each bag covers ¼ acre. These pollinator food plots are intended for small backyard projects planted in the SPRING.

**Site Preparation** (mid-March to mid-May)
Poor site preparation is the number one reason for project failures. "Ideal" site preparation for your pollinator food plot would resemble a harvested no-till bean field. Seed bed should be mostly clear (60%+ bare soil), free from weeds and firm (not freshly tilled, foot-step should not sink more than ½" into soil).

For spring lawn conversions – 1) as early as possible thoroughly till the area as you would a garden, 2) wait for annual weeds to green and grow to a height of 6", 3) spray glyphosate (Round Up) per label directions to kill actively growing weeds, 4) repeat spray application immediately prior to seeding if more weeds appear.

For existing garden-type / old food plot spring seedings – 1) remove any residual vegetation then lightly work / rake the soil in mid-April, 2) wait for annual weeds grow to height of 6", 3) spray glyphosate (Round-Up) per label directions to kill actively growing weeds, 4) repeat spray application immediately prior to seeding if more weeds appear.

# SITE PREP AND SPRING SEEDING TIPS

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**Seeding:** (May – mid-June)
Timing – Mother's Day is a great target for these projects, but projects can occur between late-April and mid-June. Optimally seed just prior to a soaking rain.

Mixing - The pollinator food plot mix is mixed with oats as a companion / nurse-crop so it is not necessary to use additional fillers. It is recommended that you stir your seed mix in a 5-gallon bucket to get a more uniform distribution of seed species before putting the mix into your broadcast seeder.

Equipment - While there are many seeding methods that would be appropriate for native seed mixes like this, small projects are typically seeded using any of many broadcast seeders (hand seeder, spreaders) available at local retail locations. Set your seeding equipment to a low setting (~1/4" opening). This is more art than science. If you set your equipment too low, it may take multiple passes. Setting too high may have you ordering more seed after you run out before your project is seeded.

Seeding Pattern – a popular seeding pattern is to start on the outer edges of the project area and work towards the middle. If seed remains after the first pass over the project, seed the project again perpendicular to the original direction of seeding. This checkerboard pattern provides an even seed coverage over the project area. Repeat until all seed is used.

Seed integration – the desired seeding depth for native seed mixes between 1/8 and 1/4 inch. After seeding, lightly rake over or pack (drive over) the project area to improve seed to soil contact. Around 30% of your seed should remain visible on the soil surface. The next soaking rain will also help better incorporate your seed into the soil

**First-year Management**
Oats have been included in this mix to improve seed distribution and reduce weed pressure in the first year. Oats and emerging annual weeds in pollinator food plots should be regularly clipped (mow / weed-whip) high, above developing seedlings. Generally, clippings should be done at 1-month intervals after seeding (Jun-Aug). Clipping height should be 10-14" and always above native seedlings. Avoid allowing clipped thatch to pile up and smother seedlings.

**Be patient** – you should see signs of some species (partridge pea, black-eyed Susan) in the first year, but don't expect a finished product (a lot of energy is going below ground). A prescribed fire in the first spring after seeding (March - April) should kick your project into high gear in year 2 and by year 3 and 4 you should have a good idea what your project will look like.

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