



# HERITAGE

seedlings, inc. \_\_\_\_\_ Unusual Deciduous Species

## NATIVE LANDSCAPE AND PRAIRIE GARDEN PLANTING

PREPARED BY ERIC HAMMOND AND LYNDA BOYER

APRIL 3, 2007

### GENERAL INFORMATION ON SITE PREPARATION, PLANTING AND MANAGEMENT

#### SITE PREPARATION

- Formal garden areas should be free of competitive weeds.
- If you are planning a garden in a “natural area” and it is comprised of dense grass and weeds, herbicide application for one to two growing seasons is recommended. Non-native pasture grasses are heavy competitors for native wildflowers. For a successful, long-term persistence, they need to be eliminated and controlled in areas where the flowers are introduced or inter-planted with native bunchgrasses.

#### PLANTING

- Loosen very hard and compacted soil prior to planting using a mattock or similar tool.
- Plant in autumn with the onset of natural rainfall and cooler temperatures.
- Plant plugs or bare root plants into unimproved soil or garden mulch, covering the entire root ball. *Be careful, do not* leave part of the root ball exposed or you risk drought stress before the plants are rooted into the soil, likewise take care not to plant them too deeply or they may rot. The root ball of our plugs are small, about 1 ¾” X 1 ¾” X 3”. To improve soil contact between the roots and the garden soil, shake off excess potting soil before planting plugs.
- *Camassia* can be planted to a depth of 6 inches at any orientation, *Brodiaea* planting depth is twice the diameter of the bulbs at any orientation, and *Erythronium* is planted horizontal at 4 inches.
- Mulch around the new plants to a depth of 2” or use some other physical weed barrier to prevent newly exposed weed seed from germinating. Wood chips and bark both make acceptable weed suppressing mulches.
- In a garden situation, annuals can add a desirable, colorful element and they help mimic the natural environment. After planting the perennials, broadcast the seed in patches onto the weed free mulch. Our native annuals all require *light* to germinate so they need to be sown on the soil surface. For them to persist in the garden, allow them to set seed each year [by July – August].

May 23, 2007

- Supplemental irrigation is required only to keep the root ball of the plugs moist and in most situations our autumn rains are sufficient. Irrigation in spring should not be required.

#### PLANTING RATES

- The suggested larger perennial in-planting rate is one perennial every 2ft<sup>2</sup>, 500 plants per 1000ft<sup>2</sup>.
- In formal landscapes, plant small groups of species either in separate clusters, or overlapping clusters like the links of a chain. To aid in the placement of the plants, height information and color is provided in the *Native Perennial Plant* list.
- For a more “natural look” plant species randomly.
- The bulbous perennials do not take up much space so they can be planted much closer and should be intermingled with the shorter stature species.

#### PRAIRIE PLANTING PLAN

- A grass dominated meadow will have a species mix of nearly 80% grasses while a forb dominated prairie will be between 50 – 60% grasses. For the best look, maintain at least 50% grasses in your planting.

#### CARE AND MANAGEMENT

- Native perennials will *thrive* on a very low level of care.
- If you desire NO volunteer plants, it is very important to cut the plants prior to seed set or reapplying mulch.
- If volunteer plants are desirable (a more “natural” look), cut back or mow in late-August or September to 2 – 4”. This will reduce built up dead leaves and thatch, and help to stimulate re-growth of species that do not have winter dormancy with autumn rains.
- **Do Not** cut *Iris tenax* or *Asclepias* ssp. earlier than late-August, other species can be cut as early as mid-July.
- Hand-weeding and selective applications of glyphosate and broadleaf herbicides will help ensure long-term persistence of the plantings.