

Excerpted from

# Sourcebook on Natural Landscaping for Local Officials

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 Sourcebook on Natural Landscaping for Local Officials\* is a manual for local public officials in the Midwest on the benefits of natural native landscaping, 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 and updated in 1998 and 2004. AES's 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 and reduced runoff. The techniques 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 is increased diversity in plants and wildlife, cost savings, and a healthier, more aesthetically pleasing landscape.

## Cost Comparison of Non-Native vs. Native Species for Landscaping Per Acre

Procedures & Material	Sodded Turf	Seeded Turf	Prairie
Herbicide <sup>1</sup>	\$140.00	\$140.00	\$140.00
Irrigation (optional) <sup>2</sup>	\$1,680.00	\$1,680.00	
Top Soil (optional) <sup>3</sup>	\$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 <sup>4</sup>			\$1,680.00
First Year Mowing	\$784.00	\$672.00	\$196.00
<b>Total Installation Per Acre, low ...</b>	<b>\$7,280.00</b>	<b>\$2,268.00</b>	<b>\$1,960.00</b>
<b>...to high</b>	<b>\$13,440.00</b>	<b>\$8,428.00</b>	<b>\$3,640.00</b>
<b>Subsequent Annual Maintenance Per Acre<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>\$1,120.00</b>	<b>\$1,120.00</b>	<b>\$168.00</b>

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.

4) Wild flower planting is optional on low profile site. The figure is based on 1,000 seedlings installed per acre planted.

5) 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.

\* Available from the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission