

Lagrange Chapter #592 Pheasants Forever

- Was formed 10 years ago to enhance wildlife habitat and increase pheasant population
- Applied for and received two 319 non point source grants for habitat development to prevent sedimentation
- 75% Cost Share for:
 - Warm Season Grass Plantings
 - Tree Plantings
 - Wetland Construction
- During 2006 Pheasants Forever planted:
 - 111.3 acres of warm & cool season grasses
 - 10.9 acres of trees
- Total acres planted in the last six years:
 - 625.3 acres of grass
 - 25.9 acres of trees
 - 5 wetlands constructed

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Pheasants Forever is a national non-profit conservation organization founded in 1982 in response to the continuing decline of the ring-necked pheasant population.

Pheasants Forever is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of pheasant and other upland wildlife populations through habitat improvement, public awareness and education, and land management that benefits farmers and wildlife alike.



Pheasants Forever Board Members taking a moment to pose for the camera at the 2006 Banquet.

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Plant Warm Season Grasses and Forbes for Wildlife Management



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Power of Prairie: Roots!

Did you know that approximately 70% of the average prairie plant is roots? The leaves, stems and flowers account for only about a third of the total living matter. Why? Prairie plants survive in an environment of extremes. Summer's heat and drought, along with winter's extreme cold and wind chill factors, cause the prairie plant to draw on its large underground storage reserve. The deep-rooted prairie plants draw moisture and nutrients from deep in the soil. The roots of the prairie plants actually help to build the soil, adding fertility and water-holding capacity. The dense prairie roots, sometimes reaching 20 feet or deeper into the soil, are like a large sponge, increasing infiltration of rainwater, reducing runoff and flooding and recharging the precious groundwater resource.

A Quick Guide to Prairie Establishment

Successful prairie grass and forbs plantings require attention to your site conditions and should follow the proper procedures:

- Planning and designing your prairie – Any sunny, level site is suitable for a prairie meadow. Kill off existing weed growth to ease stress on new plantings.
- Understanding your soil – It may be important to test your soil and add organic matter for better results.
- Site preparation – It may be necessary to treat with herbicides or to cultivate the site in the fall before spring planting.
- Seeding – Warm Season grasses and forbes can be seeded by hand or by using mechanical seeders.

Management of Warm Season Grasses

- Post-planting weed control is very important!
- First Year – use a flail-type mower to prevent clippings from smothering the small seedlings. Cut weeds back when they are 12 inches high. Expect to mow weeds possibly once a month for the first year.
- Second Year – Mow the planting right down to the ground and rake off the cuttings, if possible. If weeds are a problem, mow in late spring to a height of one foot.
- Third Year and beyond – Burning or mowing your prairie grasses on a regular basis, usually in mid-spring, can ensure continued success. Timing is critical and burning should never be done alone.

Types of native grasses include:

- **Big Blue Stem** – one of the most nutritious warm season grasses
- **Indian Grass** – grows on a variety of soils and provides nutritional forages
- **Switch Grass** – common in lowland areas, good for summer grazing
- **Little Blue Stem** – highly nutritious, makes good hay and will grow on poorer soils
- **Side-oats Gama** – ideal for hard-use areas, aids in erosion control

Role of Prairie Forbs

- Using sunlight as energy, forbes combine water and carbon dioxide to make food molecules.
- Oxygen is also produced as a by-product.
- Contribute to the richness of the prairie soil, by adding nitrogen and providing channels for passage of air and moisture.

Types of prairie forbs include:

- Shooting Star
- New England Aster
- Wild False Indigo
- Prairie Smoke
- Partridge Pea