

Prairie Maintenance

In the Cloverdale Farm Neighborhood



Prairie in Cloverdale Farm

Cloverdale Farm is a unique neighborhood in that the developer, Robert Engstrom, had a vision to foster natural prairie land from the beginning. At the start of its creation, Mr. Engstrom formed an Homeowners Association (HOA) covenant requiring each homeowner to landscape half of their property in a natural state. A majority of homeowners chose native prairie, which has created and preserved the unique aesthetic and appeal of the neighborhood that we all enjoy today.



“Low Maintenance,” Not “No Maintenance”

While prairie landscape is low maintenance, it is not “no maintenance.” **Prairie experts recommend a dormant mow every spring, with a prairie burn every three years.** This helps control weeds, prevent invasive species, and encourage prairie plant growth.





Prairie Burning

Prescribed burning is a useful tool in the management of many types of native landscapes, including prairie. Many plant community types are fire-dependent and thrive when they are burned periodically.

Proper planning, permitting, timing, safety, equipment, and implementation are all critical when conducting prescribed burns.

If you are interested in hiring a service to complete your prairie burn, a list of vendors can be found at the end of this document. Many homeowners have also found this task to be manageable independently. Please research how to obtain a burn permit through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) and/or Washington County. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to properly obtain permits and ensure the safety of both your property and your neighbors' property.



Prairie Mowing

Although native landscapes do not need regular mowing like turf, mowing is a useful tool in maintaining native landscapes. **Mowing in the dormant season (spring) can hasten the breakdown of biomass.** If your prairie has been recently planted or replanted, mowing during the first growing season can control annual weeds while the tiny native seedlings develop.

Depending on your property, it's possible to mow prairie with a riding lawnmower or a brush mower. Some local rental facilities, such as Oakdale Rentals, have these to rent in 2-hour increments or daily. You can also contact a prairie maintenance vendor to schedule a dormant mowing.

Mitigating Noxious Weeds

It's an ongoing effort to identify and control problematic weeds. Depending on the plant, there may be specific timing to mitigate the spread of noxious weeds. Some of these plants spread by underground runners, and many spread by seed. Some tend to drop their seeds nearby, and others (notably spotted knapweed and thistles) have seeds that are easily carried and blown great distances. Cutting/treating these plants when they are flowering, but before they go to seed, gives best results.

Weed populations can be dramatically reduced by these control methods, but unfortunately, **it is a continuous battle that requires yearly attention.** With everyone working together, we can reduce the time and expense involved for us all.

Want to learn more? The Minnesota Department of Transportation has a great guide to Minnesota's Noxious Weeds (dated January 30, 2023). To download a copy, visit

<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadsides/vegetation/pdf/noxiousweeds.pdf>

or use the QR code at the bottom of this page.

Be on the lookout for these noxious weeds that are problematic in Cloverdale:

Common Tansy
Johnsongrass
Canada Thistle
Meadow Knapweed
Plumeless Thistle
Poison Hemlock
Purple Loosestrife
Spotted Knapweed
Wild Parsnip
Common Buckthorn
Crown Vetch
Glossy Buckthorn
Musk Thistle
Common Mullien



← Scan this QR code with your smart phone to access the Minnesota Noxious Weed Guide online.

Prairie Maintenance Vendors

Please note that this is a directory listing of prairie maintenance vendors. It is not an endorsement or recommendation from the Cloverdale Farm HOA.

Native Resource Preservation (NRP)

260 Wentworth Avenue, West St. Paul, MN 55118

Phone: 715-307-8520

Caroline.fazzio@nrp.eco

www.nrp.eco

Great River Greening

35 West Water Street, Suite 201, St. Paul, MN 55107-2016

Phone: 651-665-9500

www.greatrivergreening.org

Landscape Renovations

12515 40th Street S., Afton MN 55001

Phone: 651-796-8697

shartung@landscaperenovations.com

www.landscaperenovations.com

Prairie Restorations

31646 128th St., Princeton, MN 55371

Phone: 763-389-4342

info@prairieresto.com

www.prairieresto.com

Questions?

**The Cloverdale Farm HOA Board
can point you to more resources.**

Please reach out to cloverdalefarmboard@gmail.com.