



# Iowa Native Prairie Planting Guide



## INTERSEED with FALL TILLAGE

*Option 2 of Increasing forb diversity in native grass-dominated stands*

Interseeding adds diversity to the prairie stand and takes advantage of forbs and grasses already present. However, the existing plants must be set back in order to establish the new seedlings.

*Note: Do not use interseed options if Introduced plants are > than 30% of the plant community. Choose a strategy that will reduce the introduced plant community.*

### FALL TILLAGE

- » **Advantage:** A dormant seeding can benefit the forb seed by going through cold-moist stratifications.
- » **Disadvantage:** It may stimulate thistle growth, introduced legumes and annual weeds.

### Steps

1. **Mow or hay stand in late summer or fall.**
  - Mowing will make it easier for the sod to be disked but won't be as advantageous as the removal of the vegetation prior to disking. *Prescribed fire or grazing could also be completed in lieu of mowing or haying.*
2. **Complete tillage in fall.**
  - This will require a heavy disk and multiple trips (up to 6 passes).
    - \* Consider placing the wings of the disk up for the first two passes.
    - \* It may be beneficial to complete a couple

passes and then let it dry out before completing additional trips.

- 50% or > soil should be exposed.
  - A good seedbed is important. A person should be able to walk and drive across it.
3. **Seed in dormant season (after Nov. 15 and prior to freeze so rolling can be performed)**
    - Roll area to firm the seedbed. A footprint should not be > 1/8" deep!
    - Broadcast and roll or drill prairie seed.
  4. **Mow as necessary.**
    - Mow when the average height of the tall native grass component is 12" tall and/or annual weeds reach knee high.
      - \* For first mowing, set mower height at 3-4".
      - \* Much of the native tall grasses will not be visible in the first mowing.
    - Increase the mower height to 6-8" after the first mowing. Mow at least three times during the first growing season.
    - In the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, the tall grasses present prior to disking will come on strong. Additional mowing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year is critical. *Root reserves are low for the tall grasses coming back, so mowing at this time can be very effective.*

*Note: If tall grasses are beginning to compete for space, apply a grass selective herbicide when the tall native grass component is actively growing in lieu of some of the mowings. Caution: This will kill any new grass seedlings!*

# Iowa Native Prairie Planting Guide Notes