

NRB Prairie Patch through the Seasons

by John C. Marlin, Project Coordinator



Greenhouse-grown seedlings were planted April 22, 2012, in a patch of mulched bare soil.

After 2 months of growth, the seedlings were about six inches high and were spreading out.

Thanks to watering during the drought, most plants thrived and some species bloomed in July.

After 4 months, prairie dropseed (grass in foreground) began to form its characteristic bunches.



Showy goldenrod (yellow), aromatic aster (purple) and Heath aster (white) bloomed in early October.

Hundreds of insect species used the patch for collecting pollen and nectar or feeding on leaves and stems (see below).

The prairie went to seed and entered dormancy in the fall. It was then mowed.

Large underground rhizomes, which sequester carbon, live through the winter and will sprout in the spring.

Insects & Flowers

- 1. Sphecid Wasp on Mountain Mint 2. Painted Lady 5. Butterfly on Blazing Star 3. Monarch 6. Caterpillar on
 - 4. Honey Bee on Goldenrod Leafcutter Bee on Mountain Mint
 - Buckeye Butterfly on Rattlesnake Master







The Prairie Research Institute would like to acknowledge the work of dozens of individuals and the following organizations for making the NRB Prairie Patch a reality: Earthskin Nursery; Red Bison and Students for Environmental Concerns (SECS), which are programs of the University YMCA; East Central Illinois Master Naturalists; Grand Prairie Friends; U of I Facilities and Services; and the Student Sustainability Committee (SSC). The SSC grant also provided plants for other locations including woodland species at the NRB and Burrill Hall and prairie plants for the Florida-Orchard Prairie and Allerton Park.