

Lawns to Legumes

COACHING GUIDE

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Coaching Guide:

Lawns to Legumes Individual Support

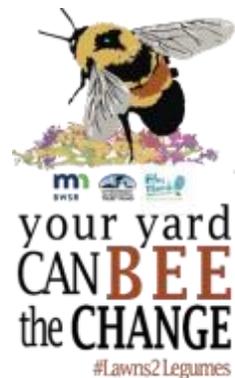
Thank you for volunteering to help Minnesotans create pollinator habitat through the Lawns to Legumes program. Coaches will be connected with residents who were awarded Lawns to Legumes Individual Support grant funding to install projects that help protect pollinators in their yards.

The Lawns to Legumes Grant Program provides workshops, free planting guides, and opportunities to apply for reimbursement — enabling Minnesota residents to create pollinator habitat in their yards. Please visit the Blue Thumb Lawns to Legumes [Coaching Information Page](#) for more information about coaching, resources for coaching, and, if you'd like to be a coach, how to apply.



In this guide:

- Key Elements for Guiding Residents
- Planting Project Types
- Different Types of Coaching
- Other Places to Find Help



Key Elements for Guiding Residents

Below, you'll find a summary of information on key principles for guiding residents who received Lawns to Legumes grants on their pollinator habitat projects.

- **Role of Coaches:** Coaches play a key role in this program, and it requires a time commitment. Know that we don't expect you to have all the answers — use your best judgment. We have additional resources below for questions you can't answer.
- **Ways to Coach:** Coaches can be paired with individual grant recipients, provide expertise during breakout sessions at a workshop (via webinar) or volunteer at the Blue Thumb exhibit at the state fair. See more details under **Different Types of Coaching**.
- **In-Person Coaching:** On-site consultations may be an option at the coach's discretion. Safety of coaches and residents — and their communities — is our first priority. Another great option is a virtual consultation via ZOOM. (If you volunteer at a workshop, you'll get experience using online Zoom tools that can be applied during a virtual consultation.)
- **Keep in Mind:** When working with residents, please check that projects are on residential property.
- **Local Ordinances:** Residents should check into local ordinances. For example, many cities restrict the types of projects done in the boulevard right-of-way.
- **Lawns to Legumes Programs:** Residents working under a Demonstration Neighborhood grant (another Lawns to Legumes program) do not qualify for a Lawns to Legumes Individual Support grant. Residents are eligible for one *or* the other.
- **Plantings should benefit at-risk pollinator species, notably the rusty patched bumble bee and monarch butterfly (Minnesota's state bee and butterfly):** See preferred plant lists for the rusty patched and the monarch in the resources on the Blue Thumb website [Coaching Information Page](#).
- **Bloom Seasons:** It's important to plant a mix of at least three blooming species in early, mid, and late season to ensure the continuous availability of food. Some pollinators, including the rusty patched, are active April through October.
- **Aesthetic Considerations:** Using features such as edging, walls, fencing, hardscapes, etc., as well as grouping plants in masses and by height help give gardens a sense of order. The program's [Planting for Pollinators](#) habitat guide has many images and templates for projects that incorporate design considerations.
- **Setting Project Expectations:** A key role for partners is to set realistic expectations for residents about the complexity of the project they take on. Starting small is often a

good idea especially for less experienced gardeners.

- **Lawn Reduction:** Encourage residents to think about how they use their lawns and which planting types are appropriate for their needs. Residents that frequently use their lawn area for recreation may want to consider a small or isolated planting, while residents that do not use their lawn as much might consider a larger project.
- **Siting a Planting:** When helping a resident determine a project site, consider factors like sunlight and the movement of water. Bees prefer to forage in sunny areas of a yard, while placing a planting where water flows through a yard can help reduce runoff and improve water quality.
- **Site Preparation:** Non-herbicidal methods of site preparation are preferred. (Grantees must commit to non-herbicide methods of management).
- **Ongoing care:** Grantees signed an agreement to care for their projects for at least three years. We generally recommend that they do maintenance around Memorial Day, the 4th of July and Labor Day at a minimum, especially in the establishment years, and to use manual methods of pulling, digging, and cutting back weeds.
- **Match Requirements:** Residents must provide **at least a 25% match** for funding. This match can be in the form of purchasing materials, hiring contractors or as in-kind time spent planting or maintaining plants (at \$25/hr).
- **Eligible Expenses:** Program funding for plants can only be spent on native vegetation, except for a few exceptions. Residents are free to add other horticultural species at their own expense. The [Eligible Expenses and Acceptable Vegetation Fact Sheet](#) has more details.



IMPORTANT: Cultivars/nativars and hybrids are not reimbursed by Lawns to Legumes. These are genetically modified for aesthetics or other traits.

While they are beautiful and add nice pops of color to your garden, they often produce less pollen and nectar, or none at all. This defeats the purpose of creating pollinator habitat; therefore, they are not reimbursed.

Cultivars usually have single quotes around the last part of their name. Hybrids have an "X" in their name.

Examples

- Agastache 'Blue Fortune', Blue Fortune anise hyssop
- Aquilegia X caerulea 'Origami Red & White', Origami Red & White columbine

Tips

- Shop at a native plant nursery instead of a chain store
- Check the plant tag!

■ =native ■ =cultivar

- **Reimbursement Requirements:** Residents are asked to save and submit receipts and photos of their projects by the deadline specified to receive reimbursement. **It is helpful to remind residents to take “before” pictures!** Once projects are completed, grant recipients can map their project and submit a request for reimbursement on the Blue Thumb website [Grantee Information page](#). Before and after pictures need to be submitted for reimbursement.

Planting Project Types

- **Pollinator Pocket Plantings:** A space as small as 10 sq. ft. can serve as pollinator habitat. Native pocket plantings are small clusters of native flowers and grasses that can provide places for pollinators to rest and feed from spring through fall. This practice is recommended for new gardeners. Pocket plantings can have different variations such as raingardens, shoreline plantings and boulevard plantings (associated construction costs, like excavation and soil disposal, are not reimbursable, but plants and mulch are). The [Eligible Expenses and Acceptable Vegetation Fact Sheet](#) has more details on reimbursable items.
- **Beneficial Trees and Shrubs:** Groupings of trees and shrubs can offer nesting areas, overwintering habitat and early-season food sources for pollinators. Beneficial native species include willows, American basswood trees, raspberry bushes and black

chokeberry. This practice is recommended for new and intermediate gardeners.

- **Pollinator Lawns:** Species such as Dutch white clover, creeping thyme, and self heal are seeded into fine fescue lawns to create a landscape that maintains the aesthetics and recreation associated with a traditional lawn, while providing high-quality forage for pollinators.
- **Pollinator Meadows:** Large plantings of diverse native plants provide habitat and water-quality benefits. Pollinator meadows require additional planning and maintenance; they're recommended for experienced gardeners.

Different Types of Coaching

Coaches will be given contact information for one to several residents depending on their capacity. To protect the privacy of coaches' phone numbers, it is up to the coaches to reach out to their assigned residents. Residents will not be provided with contact info for their coach until the coach reaches out. Coaches should send an introductory message as soon as they can to their assigned residents to provide the best way to be in touch.

- **Coaching individual grantees**

- **Calls and emails:** Some residents who receive funding will primarily need to ask questions on the phone or via email. It will be up to coaches to let residents know how much time they have available to provide assistance through a combination of email and phone calls.
- **In-Person Coaching:** A coach may choose to do on-site consultations with residents. Again, this is at the coach's discretion. Safety of coaches and residents — and their communities — is our first priority. Another great option is doing virtual consultation through ZOOM.
- **Note about privacy:** If you wish to keep your personal phone number private when connecting with residents, you can do so by typing the code *67, then typing the number you wish to call. If you choose this option, keep in mind that it will be your responsibility to reach out to the residents you are helping.

- **Workshop participation**

Online workshops are available for residents and coaches to attend. These workshops will generally focus on rain gardens, resilient yards, lawn alternatives, native plants, and soil health, and they address the Lawns to Legumes program. They are conducted via Zoom. Sometimes we ask for coaches, especially those with landscape design and plant selection experience, to be part of small-group breakout sessions where attendees can seek expertise for their yards. Minnesota Water Stewards, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and Blue Thumb Partners are asked to provide assistance here.

- **MN State Fair**

Coaches have the opportunity to represent the Lawns to Legumes program at our exhibit at the MN State Fair. They receive a free ticket to the fair! Generally, we will need coaches with a basic understanding of the program who can also answer landowner questions about native plants. Native planting templates for sun and shade will be available as handouts for fairgoers.

[Sign up to volunteer at the 2022 Minnesota State Fair.](#)

Other Places to Find Help

- We keep a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#). We'll update it as questions arise.
- Lawns to Legumes email helpline: L2Lhelp@bluethumb.org.