

Successful Plug Establishment in the Summer and Early Fall

While plug plantings are most easily established in April and May when the plants have their spring growth surge and soil moisture is typically abundant, plugs may also be successfully established in June through September. Successful plug establishment during this period requires careful attention to irrigation, use of pruning to reduce transpiration loss, and a shallow layer of mulch to retain soil moisture.

Careful attention to irrigation for the first 4-6 weeks is critical to the success of a new planting. If there is not an easily available water source at the installation site, do not install plugs during the summer. First, when the plugs are staged at the site, it is essential to run a sprinkler over them at least an hour per day. More may be required if the weather is particularly hot and windy. Once installed, the plants may need as much as 2 inches of water per week for the first couple of weeks. However do not keep the soil waterlogged as this condition can lead to a rapid decline of upland species. Therefore, we recommend watering every second or third day to allow the soil to drain between waterings. Wilting in the afternoon is a sign that it is time to water again. After two weeks, the plants should be partially established and watering may typically be scaled back to twice a week totaling 1 to 1.5 inches per week. If the fall is dry, continue watering until the plants start to go dormant.

Remember that water loss from transpiration is roughly proportional to leaf surface area, so do not hesitate to cut the plants back to $\frac{1}{2}$ of their original leaf surface area. This will reduce transplant shock as well as water needs. Finally, a shallow layer of organic mulch such as leaf compost or fine shredded hardwood bark will aid in retention of soil moisture during the warm months. The mulch should be a maximum of 2 inches in depth and not heaped around the crowns of the plants.

Plant Feature: *Allium cernuum* (Nodding Wild Onion)

This low-stature forb of prairies and dry open woods is an excellent species for inclusion in landscaping and restorations. The flowers develop in July on stalks up to 15" tall while the leaves remain under 1 foot in height. The flowers are typically white washed with pale pink, developing from a nodding bud and forming spherical clusters. The grass-like foliage is attractive throughout the growing season. In landscaping, this species is particularly effective when mixed with prairie dropseed or other low stature grasses and sedges, since the *Allium* foliage is barely noticeable among the graminoid foliage. The result is the appearance of the graminoid having showy flowers. In its natural habitat it occurs on dry wooded bluffs under oaks and hickories as well as mesic to dry prairies. In a restoration, it may be utilized in either situation with associates from our [Upland Woodland Mix](#) or our [Low-Stature Prairie Mix](#).

