PROJECT PLAN FOR MAKING A NATIVE 10 x 10 FOOT GRASS PATCH AT THE GARLAND COMMUNITY GARDEN

PROJECT TITLE: "THE ALTERNATIVE LAWN"

PURPOSE OF THIS PATCH OF GRASS: to educate the public on the value of replacing their lawns with a native grass by showing them how nice it looks and how little care is required. We will also have a sign and information regarding the project.

Buffalo Grass appears to be a great alternative as it creates a sod, much like St. Augustine or Bermuda. But, unlike St. Augustine or Bermuda, Buffalo Grass only needs 12 inches of water a year, does not respond to fertilizers AND does not have to be mowed since it get no taller than four or five inches.

Look at how much work St. Augustine requires—mowing, fertilizing, pest control, watering, etc.:
http://publications.tamu.edu/TURF_LANDSCAPE/PUB_turf_Maintaining%20St.%20Augustine%20Grass%20Lawns.pdf]

Location: Space beside the Iris bed in front of the Children's Garden (about a 10 x 10 foot patch). This one will be easy because, other than pulling up the grass/weeds growing there now, we will not have to prepare the soil in any way. We will just sow the seeds and keep it moist until the native grass is established—provided all the claims for this grass are true including that it grows in unamended clay soil.

STEP ONE: March 2
Obtain approval from the members to order one packet of grass seeds from Native American Seed
http://www.seedsource.com/

D-Paks are the smallest seed packets for sale. Each pack is designed to cover 200 square feet. Our 10 x 10 plot would be 100 square feet. Thus we need one packet. Over seeding will ensure good results.

Each D-Pak is $9—thus a total of $9 is needed for the seed.

STEP TWO: March 2
Order the seed.

STEP THREE: Create related signage.

- **$15**

STEP FOUR:
Clear the space, make cardboard and mulch border, put in two stakes with string to divide the plot in half and put up signage.

STEP FIVE:
Plant the seed. We will water both sides of the plot as recommended on the seed packet until the grass is established. After that, one side gets no water beyond natural rainfall and the other side will get an inch of water every two weeks.

Total Estimated Cost: $40

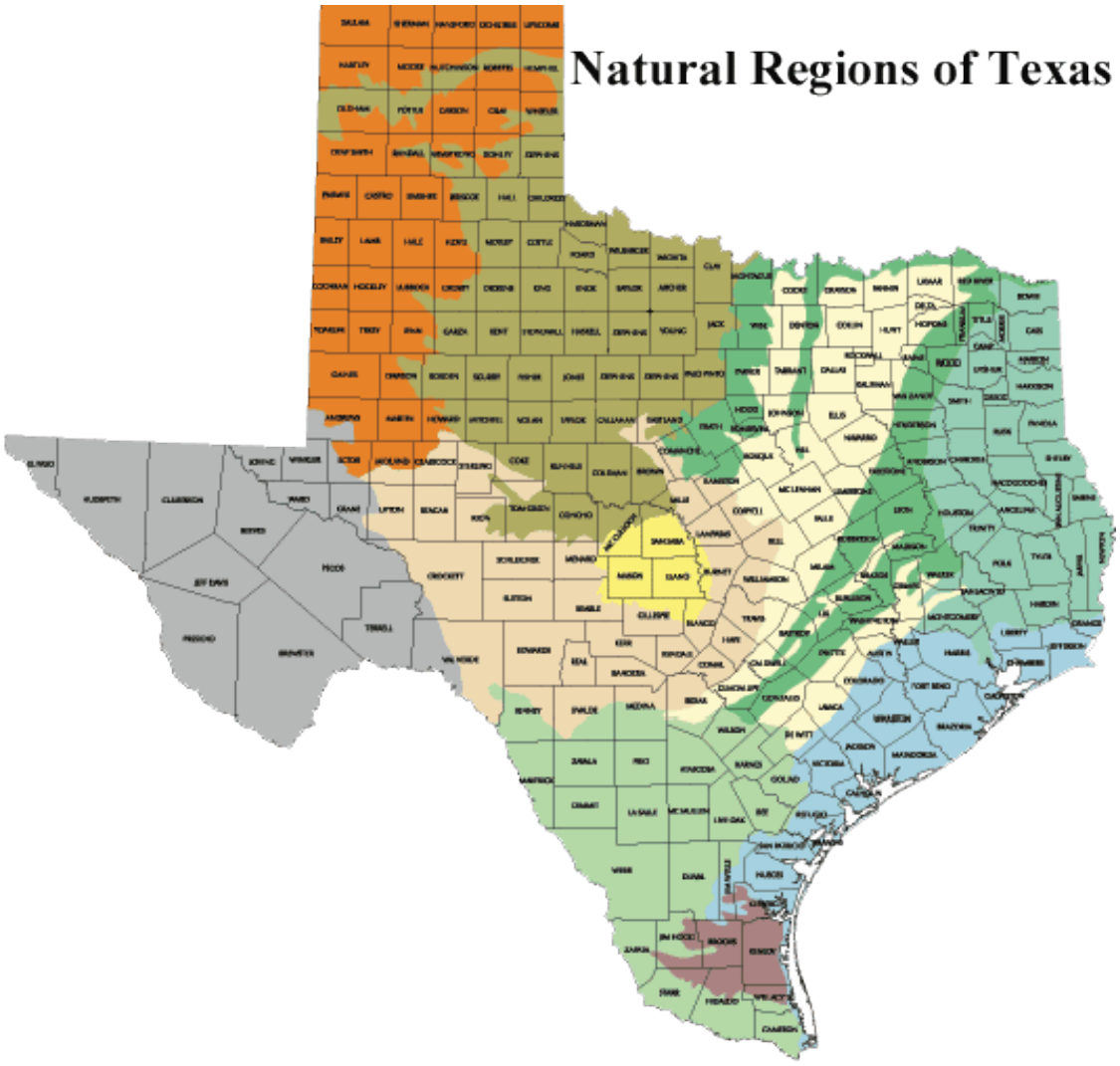
$9 seed
$15 Mulch around the perimeter of bed [Note: we will need to lay down a two-foot wide cardboard border around the edge of this bed and put some mulch on top of the cardboard to prevent Bermuda grass runners from invading the bed.]
$15 for PVC pipes and signage

BUFFALO GRASS

- **Buffalo Grass D-Pak $9**
  Note: Buffalo seedling shown at right can take up to 21 to 28 days to germinate.

  Buffalo has no natural diseases or pests, does not respond to fertilizer, and withstands extreme heat or cold. Is found from Minnesota and Montana to Mexico. Exotic lawn grasses such as Bermuda and St. Augustine, require 60 to 120 inches of water per year, need frequent mowing, regular applications of fertilizer and pesticides, and can freeze out in harsh winters. Buffalograss prefers loamy or heavier clay soils. The best time to plant is in spring or early summer. Two important factors needed to establish a buffalo turf lawn are patience and perseverance. Buffalograss takes longer to make a dense turf but the wait is more than worth it. When established it will require little or no watering, little or no mowing with its low height, no fertilizer, since it doesn't respond to added fertilizer and it is disease and pest resistant, so no chemical pesticides are needed. Planting Buffalograss benefits the wallet and the environment.

Buffalo Grass Grows well everywhere in Texas (We are in Blackland Prairie region.)



Buffalograss

The last two pages illustrate the front/back of the sign related to this project.

BUFFALO GRASS

Buchloe dactyloides

A Sustainable Lawn

Our only truly native turfgrass

Buffalo grass can be established from seed or sod. A short, 5 to 8-inch height, sod-forming grass, it lives on as little as 12 inches of water per year. It spreads by seed and surface runners. This plot is being grown from seed purchased from Native American Seed. Buffalo grass grows well everywhere in Texas, but especially well here in our area which is the Blackland Prairie.

This 10 x 10 plot is an experiment being conducted by members of Loving Garland Green. We are experimenting to see how this native turf might work as a replacement for St. Augustine grass. One half of this plot will get no water at all except from the rainfall. The other half of the plot will receive one inch of water every two weeks—considerably less than used on most lawns in our community.

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Buffalograss is interwoven into American history. Starting with fossil remnants found in Kansas dating back 7 million years ago. It was the principal forage grass for the American bison, hence the name. Early settlers made use of Buffalograss for building their sod homes and the longhorn cattle grazed it on their way up the Chisholm Trail. It is an important part of the short grass prairie ecosystem.

For homeowners with conservation awareness, Buffalograss has become a recognized alternative for turf like lawns. The grass slowly spreads by seed and runners.

It can survive with as little as 12 inches of rain a year and during extreme dry periods will go dormant until enough moisture is available. This is a highly desirable trait for urban areas when water restrictions are enforced. Its color ranges from a green to blue green color during times of adequate moisture to a pale yellow or straw color when dormant. Buffalograss performs well in a variety of soils but likes the heavier soils best. Loamy soils are the best but it will perform great in gumbo, red or black clays and in caliche limestone soils too.

The best time to plant is in spring or early summer. Two important factors needed to establish a buffalo turf lawn are patience and perseverance. Buffalograss takes longer to make a dense turf but the wait is more than worth it. When established it will require little or no watering, little or no mowing with its low height, no fertilizer, since it doesn't respond to added fertilizer and it is disease and pest resistant, so no chemical pesticides are needed. Planting Buffalograss benefits your back, your wallet and the environment.