

**Thank you for participating in the  
Ellis County Rural Heritage Farm Seed Ball Project  
This Project is Funded by a Seed Grant Through  
Ladybird Johnson Wildflower and Native American Seeds**

While supplies last, we are providing the seeds and materials to make wildflower seed balls. If you wish to participate, Please contact Ginger Cole at 214-240-8652.

**Monday, January 17th, between the hours of 11 a.m and 3 p.m. Please join us to distribute the seed balls at the Farm. 130 Cunningham Meadows Rd, Waxahachie, TX 75165**

Due to covid, we are striving to make this outdoor event safe and socially distanced.

**Recipe For Genuine Blackland Prairie Wildflower Seed Balls**

1 cup Blackland Prairie Soil (the real deal, deep dark alkaline clay)

1 teaspoon native wildflower & grass seed mix

Mix soil and seeds together (1 cup soil fits nicely on a paper plate)

Add very small amount of water just to moisten soil. If you add too much water just add a bit more soil.

Roll into balls about 1 inch in diameter.

Place seed balls on cardboard or newspaper to dry.

1 cup soil/seed mix will make approximately 16, 1 inch seed balls.

Contact Ginger Cole @ 214-240-8652 to pick up your completed seed balls.

We will have seed balls at the farm for distribution from 11am to 3pm.

**Blackland Prairie**

**Adapted from an article by Mary Ann Melton of the Native Prairie Association. Dated June 12, 2014**



The Blackland Prairie has a special mix of soil and mineral deposits creating a rich dark soil sometimes described as black velvet. The region's high productivity probably comes from abundant invertebrate animals and fungal flora found in the soil. The soil has much calcium carbonate creating a very alkaline growing medium.

Very little native prairie remains as the early settlers plowed the land for crops and later ranchers planted coastal hay for grazing and haying. The Ecoregion starts south of San

Antonio and extends as a relatively small strip of land reaching the Oklahoma border. In the early 1800's the land was covered with tall grass prairie with riparian zones with trees around the stream courses.

Not a monoculture of plants rather a rich mixture of grasses and wildflowers. The original predominant grasses were Big Bluestem, Switch Grass, Little Bluestem and Indian Grass, plants that grow tall and produce seeds that feed many animals. In addition, many wildflowers grew interspersed with the tall grass. This mix of plants provided forage not only for the buffalo, but also many bird species and butterflies.

The dickcissel is a sparrow like bird that lives in the prairie grasslands. As the native prairie has disappeared, its habitat has also declined. From 1966 to 1978, the population declined and then stabilized. During the early summer it's melodic call resonates across the tall grass expanse. Note. Stephen Pollard reported in the INaturalist app the sighting of a Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) May 9, 2021 here in Ellis County. Hopefully, the restoration of habit on the Ellis County Rural Heritage Farm will be beneficial this any many more species of wildlife.



North of Dallas, the Parkland Prairie is a remnant of the Blackland Prairie that has been preserved. Managed by Collin County and the Nature Conservancy, it is a marvelous place to go and experience what the prairie used to be like. South of Dallas is Cedar Hill State Park with beautiful areas of restored prairie. Closer to Hutto, there is prairie restoration at the north end of Taylor Regional Park and Sports complex as well as below the dam at Lake Granger.

To bring a touch of the prairie closer to home, native tall grasses and wildflowers make beautiful ornamental additions to the home landscape. Winter sparrows will be attracted to the seeds. Native plants require less water and less care than non-native species. Whether planted in small flowerbeds, or creating a larger bed of tall grass prairie natives, you will enjoy seeing the wildlife that will visit.

For more information about how you can develop wildlife habitat at your house, visit Texas Parks and Wildlife's Wildscapes: [http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildlife\\_diversity/wildscapes/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/wildscapes/) and

for more information about other Texas prairies, visit Native Prairies Association of Texas: <http://www.texasprairie.org/>