

## **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

In an effort to improve the quality of stormwater runoff and increase local awareness of the importance of protecting our local streams and water bodies, the City of Marion is promoting methods to capture and infiltrate stormwater in residential areas. Stormwater Best Management Practices – or BMPs – such as the use of native plants in the landscape can help reduce the amount of stormwater runoff and nutrient pollution in waterways. The deep root systems create underground pathways for stormwater to infiltrate. Because native plants are adapted to the conditions in Iowa, they do not need to be fertilized and rarely have to be watered after establishment if planted in an appropriate area. As a bonus, native plants provide important ecological benefits like food and shelter for insects and birds.

The City of Marion is offering a rebate of 50% of the cost of native plants and seeds up to a maximum rebate of \$1000. Please see the following Terms and Conditions and Program Requirements sections for details on how to qualify for the rebate.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

- Maximum funding per project is up to \$1000 per property not to exceed 50% of the cost of the plants/seeds and can only be applied once per residential property.
- Applications must be approved prior to purchases being made; purchases made prior to approval may not be eligible for a rebate.
- Applicant is solely responsible for purchase, arrangement of installation, and planting.
- Proof of purchase form must be submitted within six months of purchases to qualify for a rebate.
- City staff will inspect the planted area prior to approving the rebate.
- Rebate checks will be issued to the account holder in existing buildings unless otherwise established prior to submission of application.
- Rebates may be subject to income tax. Consult your tax advisor for more information.
- Multi-family residences of five units or more are not eligible for native plant rebates.
- Rebates are subject to the availability of funds, applicants are encouraged to check the availability of rebate funding prior to making purchases.
- This program is subject to change or cancellation without notice.
- Approval of an application does not guarantee payment of rebate or acceptance of financing.
- Project must comply with rules in Program Requirements section to qualify for rebates.

## **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

### **Site preparation and maintenance**

Preparation of an area prior to planting native plants is vital to ensure their establishment and reduce weed pressure. Some common ways to prepare an area include applying herbicide like roundup multiple times over the growing season, stripping turf, covering an area with tarp or cardboard for an entire growing season, or repeated tilling of an area over the growing season. Sowing seed or planting directly into turf grass can be effective; however, it will take native plants longer to establish. A brief description of how you plan to prepare the site must be included in the rebate application.

While native plants require less maintenance than standard turf grass, they are not completely maintenance free. Regular watering will likely be needed to help plants get established and native plants should be cut at least once a year (generally in the early spring or late fall) to improve growth for the following year and to reduce fire risk due to thatch buildup. Occasional weeding will also be necessary to prevent undesirable plants from taking over. A brief description of your maintenance plan must be included in the rebate application.

Because public funds are used for this rebate, a maintenance agreement will need to be signed to ensure that the native plants are properly cared for. If the area is not properly maintained, the rebate may be rescinded. The City also reserves the right to enforce its weed ordinance if the area is not properly maintained.

### **Site layout**

The following guidelines must be followed for your site to qualify for the Native Plant Rebate:

- Minimum five-foot setback around structures, right of way/sidewalks, and adjoining properties. Larger setbacks to roads will be required near intersections.
- No planting in the right-of-way.
- Minimum area 100 square feet.
- Maximum area 1/2 of yard.
- Some type of native plant/pollinator garden signage must be displayed if the proposed area is a “patch prairie” and not a landscaped planting area.

A site plan that conforms to these guidelines must be submitted with the rebate application form. Applicants are encouraged to locate their native planting area on a downslope part of the property to maximize the amount of stormwater it can impact.

### **Plant selection**

The rebate for this program will apply to most species native to Iowa with a full-grown height of less than four feet. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis. This program will cover the cost of seeds or live plants for approved species; however, individual plants that cost more than \$20 will not qualify for the rebate. Homeowners should check with neighborhood associations to clarify covenants addressing vegetation.

Reach out to the Engineering Department at 319-743-6340 with any questions. Some additional sources for native plants can be found at the following links:

<https://iowastormwater.org/campaigns/rainscaping/native-landscaping/>

<https://monarchresearch.org/pollinator-zones/>

<https://www.prairiemoon.com/PDF/growing-your-prairie.pdf>

Submit this page prior to making purchases. Failure to submit and get approved prior to making purchases may make project ineligible for the rebate.

## **APPLICATION**

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Marion Utilities Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

## **Site Information**

Provide a brief description of how the planting area will be prepared and maintained:

Attach a list of the plants you will be planting/seeding along with anticipated costs.

Attach a site plan for your native plant project, make sure it meets the guidelines given in the Program Requirements section.

Attached a signed copy of the Maintenance Agreement.

## **Customer Agreement**

I certify that I am a customer of the City of Marion utilities, and that this native plant area will be constructed on the lawn at the address specified above. I have read and agree to the Terms and Conditions on the first page. All statements made and information provided in this application are correct. I understand that the City of Marion reserves the right to inspect and verify this planting before issuing a rebate and that If the area is not properly maintained, the City of Marion reserves the right to enforce the weed nuisance policy.

Customer Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- Completed application and maintenance agreement can be submitted at City Hall or mailed to:  
City of Marion Stormwater BMP Rebate Program, 1225 6th Avenue, Suite 200, Marion, IA 52302.

## **For City of Marion Use Only**

Date Submitted to City for Approval \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Account No. \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed By \_\_\_\_\_ Date Approved by Engineering \_\_\_\_\_

Submit this page after application approval and project completion. Attach your original rebate application, copies of sales receipts, and a picture of the completed project.

### MARION NATIVE PLANT REBATE - PROOF OF PURCHASE FORM

Date	Description	Amount
_____	_____	\$ _____
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TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_