

# Drought Sprouts Prairie Meadow and Bee Lawn in Falcon Heights



## Client Overview

The drought of 2021 killed a big part of John and Kris Robertson-Smith's lawn in the front yard of their Falcon Heights home. During the process of determining what to do about it, they admitted they didn't spend much time out there, and their dislike for lawn maintenance came to the forefront. John summed it up: "I wanted something that I didn't have to mow and spend hours weeding, and I didn't want to use chemicals."

With the help of Minnehaha Falls Landscaping (MFL), John and Kris found the perfect solution; invite endangered birds, butterflies, and bees to enjoy their yard instead. So, in August of 2022, MFL transformed the front of Kris and John's large corner lot from dead grass to a prairie meadow and bee lawn.

## Challenge

The only challenge with their bird, butterfly, and bee buffet would be to keep it watered for the first three months. They knew that if they did, the plants would grow, along with the ground cover, making it weed resistant, and if they didn't, they would rewind to 2021. "Planting the prairie meadow and bee lawn was an investment, so we took watering seriously," John says. "It was a short-term investment for long-term gain."

## Solution

The homeowners were right. A drought resistant no-mow lawn prairie meadow would fill their yard with color and activity. In addition to Joe Pye Weed, Pennsylvania sedge, blue stem, and ornamental grasses, and other delicious plants, MFL planted three Mountain Ash, a white pine, and three serviceberry shrubs. "At first, we weren't interested in planting the trees," says Kris. "Then Russ Henry challenged that thinking, and we agreed to go with it. And, once we saw the trees in the ground, it expanded our vision of what was possible."

## Results

After a full year of growth, Kris and John's yard is full of color and activity, and they're exploring a meadow that is filled with birds, butterflies, and bee pollinators. They like the fact that some plants are blooming, and others won't flower for two to three years, making it more interesting to watch. Neighbors and strangers are stopping by and getting inspired. And now that the front yard is self-sufficient, John and Kris are enjoying the seclusion of their back yard.



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- John Robertson-Smith

