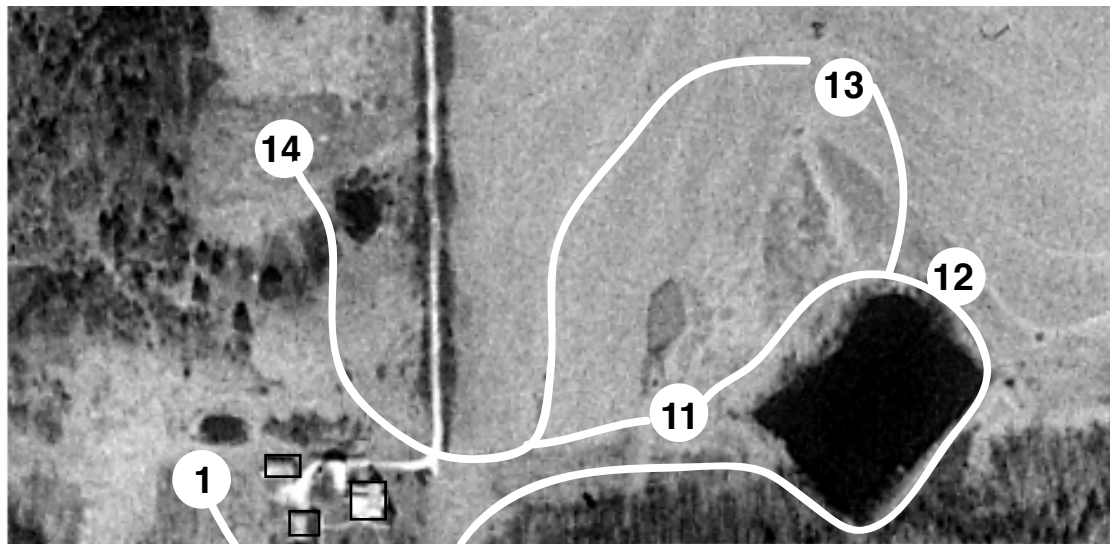
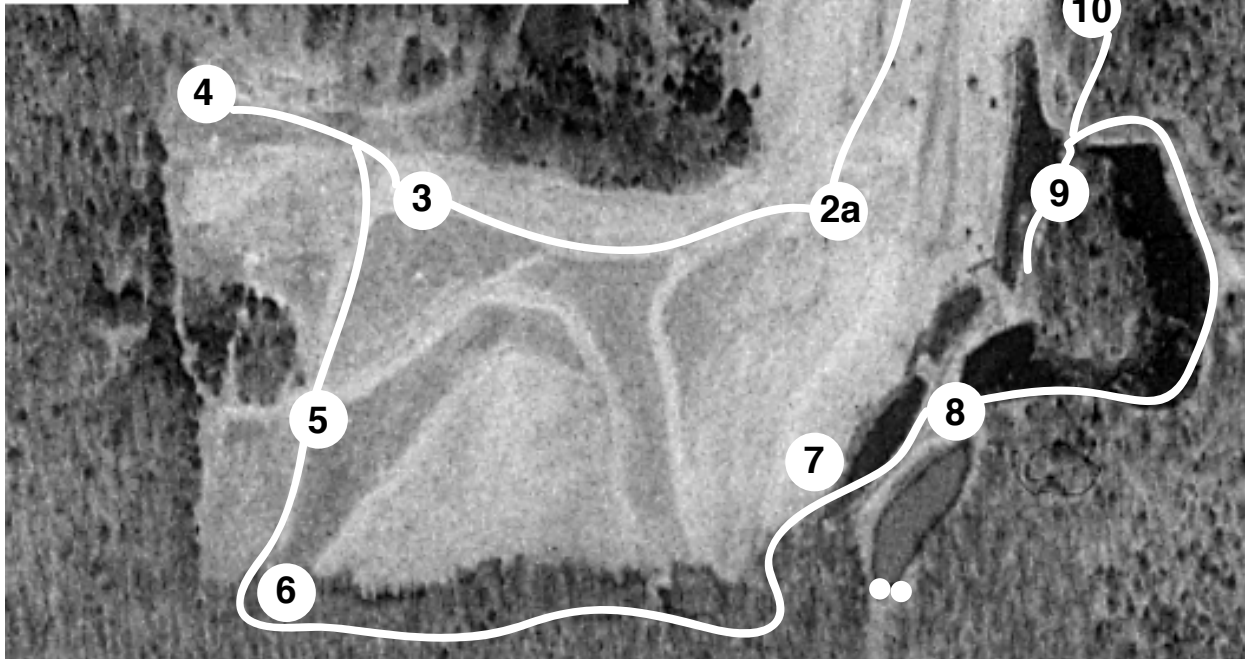




A Self-guided Walk

1. DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

This small garden near the parking area gives a close look at some plants you'll find on the prairie plantings. It's a naturally changing seasonal display—from the short spring forbs (flowers) such as prairie violets and shooting stars to the taller summer goldenrod and sunflowers. Grasses here include buffalo grass, little bluestem, prairie dropseed and sideoats grama. A new planting to the west is in progress. It began in 2000.



2. SOUTH PRAIRIE

A path leads through the center of this area, which was one of the first to be converted from fescue. More than 28 types of forbs and four grasses have been added since 1986. Some of the more noticeable plants include gray-headed coneflower (June+), blazing star (July+), rattlesnake master (July+) and stiff goldenrod (August+). Switchgrass and little bluestem are visible grasses.

2a. 1.4 ACRES

This was one of the areas planted after the south prairie. It was disked a few times and planted with scattered seeds in January 1990.

3. "TALLGRASS" PRAIRIE

In the early 1800s, about 1/3 of Missouri was prairie. Depending on the moisture and soil of each site, prairie grasses varied from short buffalo grass and little bluestem to taller indiagrass and big bluestem. All were planted here in 1986.

4. SAVANNA

Savannas are grasslands with scattered trees. They form a transition between prairies and forests. Historically, Missouri was about a third savanna. Fire and drought played a part in maintaining both savannas and prairies.

5. DROPSEED AREAS

Gardening is always tricky—and creating a garden with native plants is trickier still. Sand and tall dropseed were seeded in area #5, but we haven't seen them growing here. On the other hand, you'll find several types of flowers: prairie phlox (May+), butterfly weed (June), poppy mallow (June) and gumweed (August).

6. SOUTH WOODS

This forest shows how managing your woods can create an attractive place to walk, wood to harvest and food for wildlife. In the 1940s, this area was clear-cut (most of the larger trees were cut and removed). As you can tell from the similar size and age of many of the oaks now standing, the sprouts in the 1940s responded to all the sunlight that the clearcut created by growing and thriving. Maples, which can grow in the shade, are now popping up all over. This is the natural change from one species to another (shade-tolerant species invading light-loving species). In 1988, timber stand improvement (TSI) was done here. That entailed killing selected trees and leaving others. TSI thins the forest, just as you'd thin plants in a garden to help others grow. This area is especially beautiful in the spring when the dogwoods and serviceberry trees bloom and in the fall when maples, oaks and dogwoods are ablaze with color.

7. SWAYING CYLINDER

There were five of these aluminum cylinders designed by KC artists to hang here, but they're slowly falling away.

8. AMERICAN LOTUS POND

This pond is filled with *Nelumbo lutea*, or American lotus. They bloom from late June to September. Given the right habitat (shallow, still water and muddy bottoms), they grow rapidly by rootlike runners into extensive colonies which can get out of hand in small ponds. Native Americans ate the starchy roots and young shoots. Ducks eat the seeds, and beaver and muskrat eat the roots.

9. WATER LILY PONDS

Near the lotus planting, another pair of ponds contain a variety of water plants. Pickerel weed sends up a spike of blue flowers throughout the summer. The flowers open in the morning and close in the afternoon, as do the flowers of the water lily. Beaver, muskrat and deer eat their leaves and roots, waterfowl eat their seeds, and bluegills enjoy the shelter they provide. You can also see arrowhead, which carries arrow-shaped leaves and 3-petaled, white flowers.

10. ASH WOODS

A trail leading north of the lily ponds passes through a group of ash trees. They seem to thrive in this area, but are less common among the oaks and hickories elsewhere.

11. WEST OF THE LAKE

Further northeast of the ponds and east of the homeplace is an area that was scraped to build a dam for the pond below more than 25 years ago. In spite of the heavy clay, several flowers

and grasses successfully grew from later plantings there. Most noticeable are the liatris (blazing star) and purple coneflower.

12. WET LOWLANDS / AREA NE OF LAKE

The low area on the northeast corner of the lake gives a chance to see several plants that are typical of low wet prairies such as cordgrass and eastern gamma grass. Compass plant and cup plant are two related species just to the north of the path. They bloom in July and August. At the time these were planted, some other seeding was done nearby on small strips of land rising to the north and east of the lake.

13. FIVE-ACRE PRAIRIE

In 1993, we killed about five acres of terraced fescue in hopes of seeding to a more diverse, native mix of grasses and forbs. That was the year of the floods, however, so a cover crop was put on and the actual planting with a no-till drill didn't take place until 1995. Like most prairie plantings, it took several years for the natives to take hold and flourish. In the summer of 2000, the little bluestem, prairie larkspur, gray-headed coneflower, liatris and others finally appeared. So instead of an annual weed patch, it's slowly becoming a diverse, prairie-like place. On one of the late April birdwalks in 1997, a Henslow's sparrow was spotted (and hadn't been seen here before).

14. NORTH PRAIRIE

This area north of the homeplace was planted with more than twenty types of flowers and a few grasses. Indian paintbrush, which is an annual, blooms in the spring. Butterfly weed and gray-headed coneflower bloom in June. In late summer, sunflowers put on a show.