

BEAUTIFY LACROSSE

Enhancing
Habitats at Home



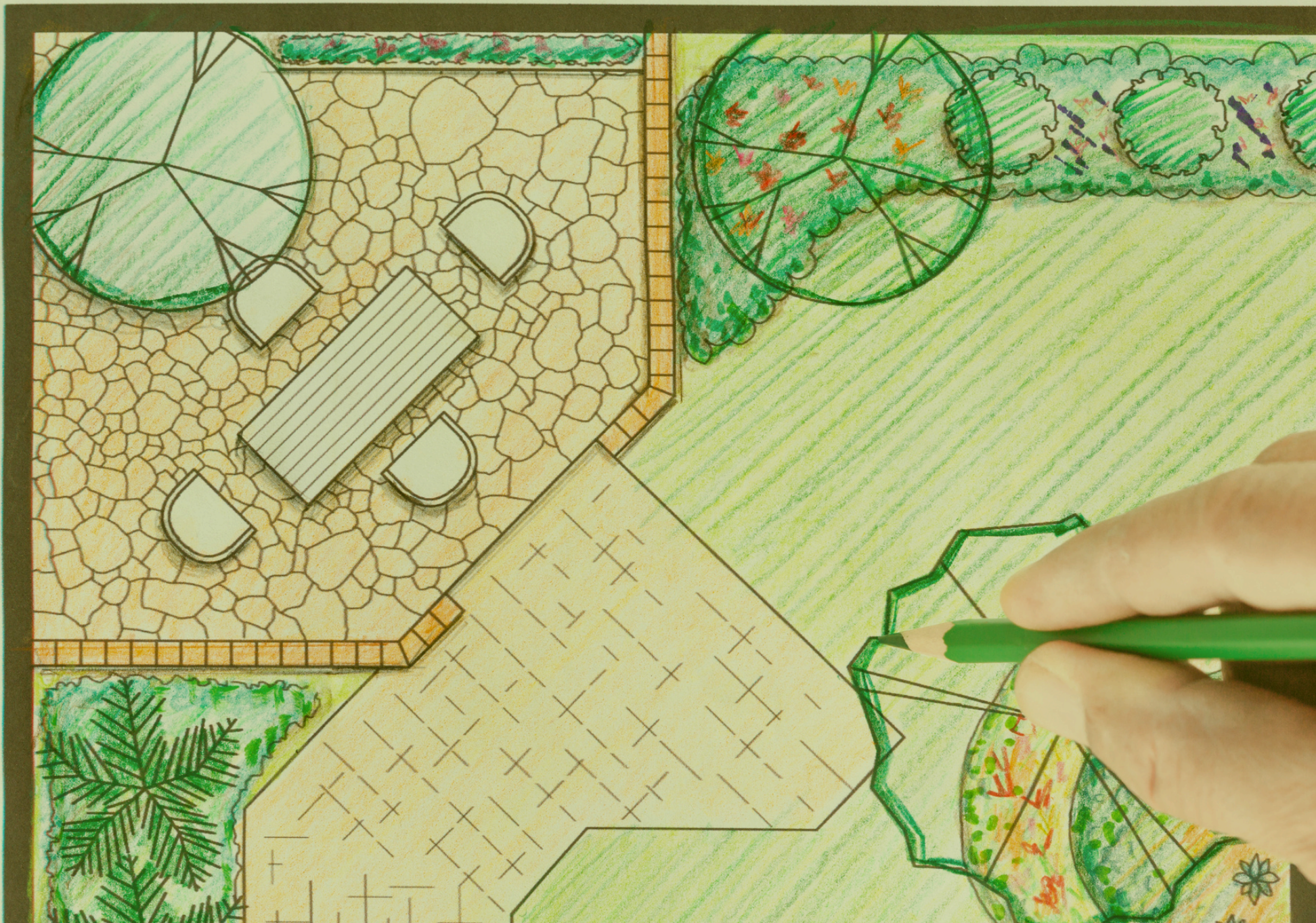


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Please note: This guidance document is embedded with clickable links to resources and references and is best viewed online. To view the guide on your desktop or mobile phone, please visit bit.ly/BeautifyLaCrosseGuidance

Did you know?

- Native plants co-evolved with native insects and wildlife.
- Native plants filter water, restore habitat, clean air, and build soil.
- Native plants require less water than lawns and help prevent erosion.
- Native plants do not require fertilizer and require fewer pesticides than lawns.

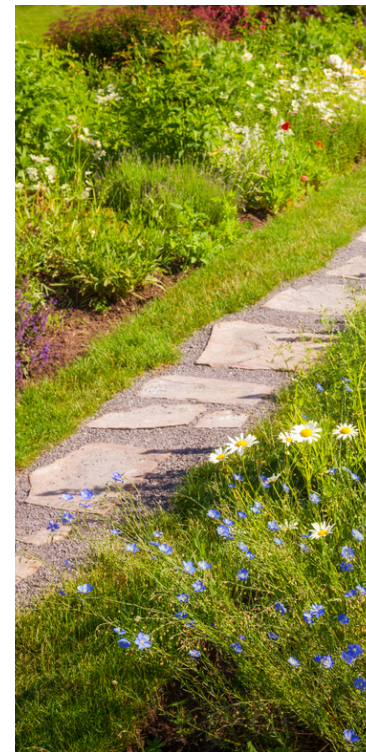


Native Gardening
US Forest Service

Why Natives?
Prairie Moon Nursery

What is Beautify La Crosse?

"Beautify La Crosse" is a community-driven initiative aimed at enhancing the aesthetic appeal and environmental health of La Crosse, Wisconsin. The program provides community members with the opportunity to adopt public spaces such as boulevards, traffic circles, park garden beds, and open green spaces. By participating, community members contribute to a cleaner, greener, and more aesthetically pleasing city, which improves local ecosystems, reduces pollution, and fosters a sense of pride and connection among residents. Engaging in these activities not only benefits the environment, but also promotes a community spirit, and ensures a healthier, more vibrant future for all who live in La Crosse.



Beautify La Crosse FAQs

Do I have to apply?

Yes. All plantings proposed on public property must submit an application to be reviewed by the City's engineering, inspections and park departments. **See pg.** for information surrounding the application process.

What can I plant? At least 50% of plants used in the project area must be native to our region, and shall not be taller than 30 inches. **See pg.** for information on suggested plantings.

Is there a fee to apply? There is no fee to apply for the Beautify La Crosse program. The program is voluntary, and costs associated with the plan including plantings and landscaping are assumed by the applicant. The City is able to provide natural chips for the area at by request, and at no cost.

What types of land can I apply to beautify?

City owned properties and green spaces such as traffic circles, medians, boulevards and garden beds are areas that are available for the Beautify La Crosse program. This program does not apply to private properties.

Who can apply for Beautify La Crosse?

Individuals, organizations, or businesses can apply for the Beautify La Crosse program. The program requires a 3-year minimum commitment to care for the beautified area.

What else is the City doing to promote sustainability?

Check out the City of La Crosse's [Climate Action Plan](#), or visit our [Sustainability Page](#) to learn more about the Parks Department's sustainability initiatives.

Who Can Apply?

Individuals, businesses, clubs, and organizations can all participate! The applicant is responsible for general maintenance including weeding, watering, trimming, and removal of excess material.

By Participating in the program, the participant agrees to:

- Maintain the entire planting site during all seasons for a minimum of three years.
- The City is not responsible for restoring damage caused by street maintenance, drainage and utility construction, and snowplowing. Improvements which interfere with the performance of City operations or public utilities may be ordered for removal.
- Digger's Hotline must be called prior to any disturbance of ground. (This is a free service to call in to, and we recommend recording what the ticket number is.)
- The owner should be aware of the locations of their own sewer lateral, water service, and any irrigation systems. Those are all the responsibility of the owner.
- There may also be shallow private utilities located in this area, such as gas main, electrical lines, or communication lines, for which the City has no information.
- Dispose of all waste vegetation, materials and litter appropriately. **(Sec. 34-113)**
- Rocks and stones are not permitted in boulevards
- Erosion control must be installed and maintained at owner expense at the catch basin/inlet that is in the curb & gutter of property
- Participants are financially responsible for purchasing plants and materials necessary for their planting project. *Black dirt, and mulch are available free to residents at Isle La Plume Brush & Yard Waste Site.

How to Apply

All applications are reviewed by the City of La Crosse Engineering & Community Risk Management department prior to being submitted to the Board of Park Commissioners for final approval. The Board meets every third Thursday of the month. Delays in application approval can be avoided by submitting them early in the month to allow for time for approval before sending them to the Board of Parks Commissioners.

Application Process:

1. Identify the area which you would like to enhance, and create a simple design describing your project area and plan enhancements.
2. Submit your completed application to the Parks & Forestry Department to begin initial review process.
3. Following Parks & Forestry Dept.'s review, the application will be submitted for review to the La Crosse Engineering and Community Risk Management departments.
4. The application will be submitted to the Board of Parks Commissioners for final approval.
5. Once approved, get started with your plantings and enhancements right away!

Required Application Materials

- Completed application including contact information, location type, and project intent
- Detailed list of necessary materials and plant species
- Maintenance plan: describe your anticipated maintenance to the area including weeding, watering, trimming, etc.
- Concept Design including dimensions, materials and plant species list. An example is provided at the end of this document.

Location & Species Guidance

Where can I plant?

- Boulevards
- Traffic Circles
- Medians
- Landscaped Park Beds
- Open Green Spaces

What Can I Do?

- Plant a micro-prairie in your boulevard
- Establish a rain garden
- Plant native plants in traffic circles
- Develop a pollinator garden in your neighborhood
- Improve and maintain a previously landscaped area

Planting Requirements

- **At least 50% of plants used in new planting must be native to our area.** A list of suggested plants is available on the [Beautify La Crosse web page](#). This guide provides a starting point for residents looking to choose the best Wisconsin native plants for their yard or Beautify La Crosse project area.
- Boulevard Plantings shall not be taller than 30 inches with the exception of trees (Municipal code 34-114).
- Boulevard Plantings must maintain a 15' vision clearance from any intersection (including streets & alleyways).
- The Beautify La Crosse program is only applicable for trees and objects of natural growth. Should an applicant wish to plant trees in their project location, a **boulevard tree planting permit** will also be required.
- Any non-natural growth objects (planters, pavers, etc.) may require a **long-term street privilege permit**.
- Inclusion of Prohibited Plants will result in denial of application. **Prohibited Plant list can be found here.**

Where Can I Plant?

Boulevards

What is a boulevard?

The boulevard is the area between the sidewalk and curb or street.

What can I plant?

Click [here](#) for a list of recommended plants

Is there a height restriction for plantings?

All boulevard plantings, with the exception of trees, shall not be taller than 30 inches.

Will the City provide any materials?

Mulch, black dirt, and composting is available at Isle la Plume located at 2000 Marco Drive, La Crosse WI.

Are permanent structures allowed?

Permanent structures, such as a raised bed, are not permitted to be placed on the boulevard through this program.



Where Can I Plant?

Traffic Circles

What is a Traffic Circle?

Neighborhood traffic circles consist of a circular intersection constructed at the intersection of two local residential streets for traffic calming and aesthetic purposes

What can I plant?

Click [here](#) for a list of recommended plants

Is there a height restriction for plantings in traffic circles?

No.

Will the City provide any materials?

Mulch, black dirt, and composting is available at Isle la Plume located at 2000 Marco Drive, La Crosse WI.

Are permanent structures allowed?

Permanent structures, such as a raised bed, are not permitted to be placed in traffic circles through this program.



Where Can I Plant?

Medians

What is a Median?

A median is the area between opposing lanes of traffic. Medians are generally raised 6-7 inches above the surrounding roadbed.

What can I plant?

Click [here](#) for a list of recommended plants

Is there a height restriction for plantings in medians?

No.

Will the City provide any materials?

Mulch, black dirt, and composting is available at Isle la Plume located at 2000 Marco Drive, La Crosse WI.

Are permanent structures allowed?

Permanent structures, such as a raised bed, are not permitted to be placed in medians through this program.



Where Can I Plant?

Landscaped Park Beds

The Parks Department maintains 47 parks throughout the City of La Crosse.

Each park offers uniquely different opportunities for individuals or groups to participate in maintaining and improving existing landscaped areas.

Maintenance may include weeding, watering, trimming, spreading mulch, etc.



Where Can I Plant?

Rain Gardens

What is a rain garden?

Rain Gardens are landscaped areas planted with wildflowers and other native vegetation that soak up rain water, mainly from the roof of a house or other building.

What can I plant?

Click [here](#) for a list of recommended plants

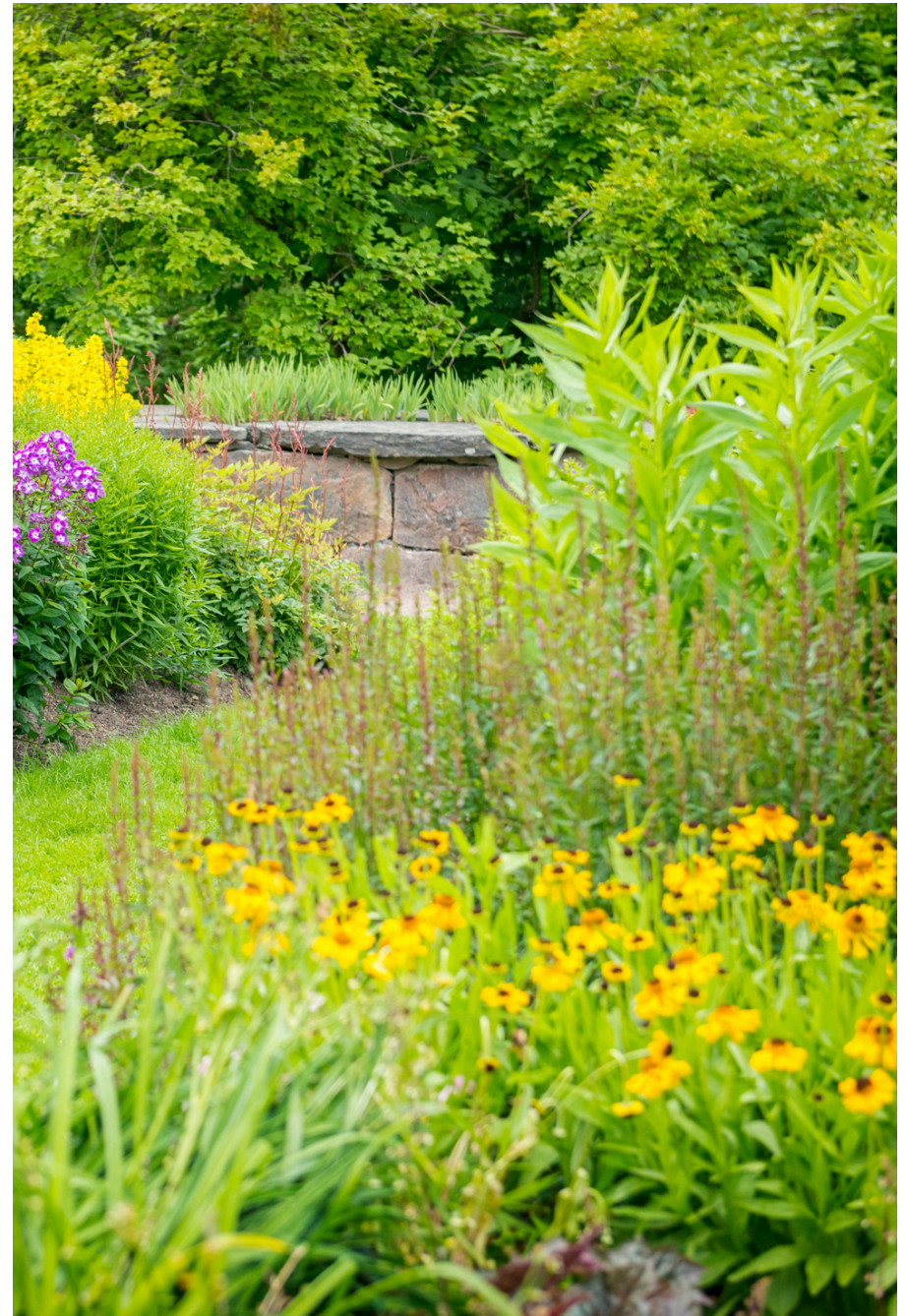
Is there a height restriction for planting in rain gardens?

Location dependent, contact parks and recreation department for more information.

Will the city provide any materials?

Mulch, black dirt, and composting is available at Isle la Plume located at 2000 Marco Drive, La Crosse WI.

If interested you can find helpful information about rain gardens [here](#)!



BEFORE YOU PLANT

Below are important reminders and considerations for applicants to review prior to applying or implementing their Beautify La Crosse Project.

- Planting projects require a three-year minimum commitment
- Plantings must not interfere with sidewalks or roadways
- Fire hydrants and utility lines must be accessible and visible at all times
- Plantings in road boulevards are restricted in height to 30 inches or less (not including trees)
- Participants are financially responsible for purchasing plants and materials necessary for their planting project.
- The city reserves the right to require the removal of unkempt or abandoned installations.
- Prohibited changes include, but are not limited to, installation of fencing, paving, recycled asphalt, brick pavers, concrete, landscaping gravel, exposed aggregate, etc.
- The City is not responsible for restoring damage caused by street maintenance, drainage and utility construction, and snowplowing.
- Improvements which interfere with the performance of City operations or public utilities may be ordered for removal.

Connections to the Climate Action Plan

The City of La Crosse is committed to environmental stewardship and sustainability. Beautify La Crosse proves to be an impactful initiative that engages the community and aligns with broader environmental sustainability and conservation goals within the community. Specific sections and strategies are detailed throughout the plan, along with actions to complete these strategies.

GS 2: Increase pollinator supportiveness of lawns and grasslands in the community and achieve a 5% turf replacement with native grasses and wildflowers by 2030 (175 acres reduced by 2030).

GS 4: Increase climate resilience of community's parks and open spaces.

The Climate Action Plan and the Beautify La Crosse initiative are harmoniously aligned in their commitment to fostering a sustainable and vibrant community. By emphasizing environmental stewardship, the Climate Action Plan aims to reduce carbon emissions and promote renewable energy, which directly supports the Beautify La Crosse initiative's goal of creating attractive, green urban spaces. These efforts not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the city but also improve air quality, promote biodiversity, and foster a sense of community pride. Through collaborative efforts, these initiatives work hand-in-hand to ensure that La Crosse remains a beautiful, healthy, and resilient place for current and future generations.



[Learn more about the City's Climate Action Plan here.](#)



Resources

Each of the resources below is linked directly to the website where you can find additional information on the topic you've selected.

City of La Crosse

1. [City of La Crosse Climate Action Plan](#)
2. [Municipal Code](#)
3. [Beautify La Crosse Webpage](#)

Native Plants

1. [Plant Native Plants to Help Nature - Wisconsin DNR](#)
2. [Pollinator Friendly Native Plant Lists - Xerces Society](#)
3. [Lawn Alternatives - Iowa State University Extension](#)
4. [Planting & Maintaining a Bee Lawn - University of Minnesota Extension](#)

Beautify La Crosse

1. [Program Brochure](#)
2. [Application](#)
3. [Suggested Plant List](#)
4. [Prohibited Plant List](#)
5. [Examples](#)
6. [Rain Garden Guide](#)

References

1. [La Crosse Area Waters](#)
2. [Wisconsin DNR](#)
3. [Wisconsin Native Plant Nurseries](#)
4. [US Forest Service - Native Plant Materials](#)

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Do your little bit of good where you are; it is those little bits of good put all together that overwhelm the world.

-Desmond Tutu