

Title of project: Meadow Project at the Technology Farm

Project leaders: Toni Flower (intern), Elizabeth Lamb, Brian Eshenaur,

Cooperators: Jana Lamboy, Susan Noble, Steve Isaacs

Abstract:

An area at the Technology Farm in Geneva is being developed as a meadow by an IPM intern from FLCC, in order to get hands on experience with low input alternatives to traditional lawns. The meadow will serve as a demonstration site and as the basis for IPM educational materials for the homeowner audience. The landscape plan includes areas of a low growing fescue mix and a medium height meadow mix, plantings to supplement some existing meadow, grass walkways, and interpretive signs on the IPM benefits of a meadow.

Justification:

When the Technology Farm was built, it was meant to be surrounded by native plant meadows rather than traditional lawns. Although the meadows were planted, no plan for maintenance was followed and as a result they were in poor condition. We saw potential in improving part of the meadow area as a demonstration site and to form a basis for IPM educational materials on the establishment and maintenance of low input lawn alternatives. It is also a project that fits well with the interests of the IPM intern from Finger Lakes Community College, Toni Flower.

Objectives:

The objective of this project is to use the development of a meadow at the Technology Farm as a demonstration and to create educational materials on meadows as lawn alternatives

While some of Toni's activities have been hands-on planting and improvement of the landscape, there will be 4 products from the internship:

- 1) A project plan presented to the Technology Farm
- 2) A maintenance plan for the Technology Farm meadow.
- 3) Interpretative signs to explain the project, and the IPM applications of a meadow
- 4) A fact sheet for homeowners on how to create a meadow and its IPM benefits

Procedures:

Toni Flower met with Brian Eshenaur, Jana Lamboy, Elizabeth Lamb and Debra Marvin to discuss what was needed for the project. This resulted in an action plan for the following activities:

Development and presentation of a landscape plan to the Technology Farm staff

Development of an implementation plan for 2007/8

Development of a continuing maintenance plan

Development of educational materials

Results:

Development and presentation of a landscape plan to the Technology Farm staff – Based on resources she collected and discussions with team members, Toni created a landscape plan for the meadow beds (attached). The proposal covers two beds bounded by sidewalks near the front doors of the Tech Farm building. While originally planted with a meadow mix, the

beds had become unkempt with weeds hanging over the sidewalks. Toni's plan, which she presented to the Technology Farm staff on August 22, includes replacing the existing plants with a low growing fine fescue mix along the outer edges, and a medium height meadow mix in a band just inside the fescue. These mixes can tolerate some mowing and will present a neater appearance while still fitting the meadow definition. The interior of the beds will be supplemented with additional native plants. Grass walkways with interpretive signs will also be added. She incorporated suggestions from the meeting, including making the border areas irregular in shape for a more natural look.

Development of an implementation plan for 2007/8 - The implementation plan includes the choice of plants or mixes to be planted, a map of the beds for utilities and walkways, coordination of Tech Farm staff, NYSAES staff and team members for bed preparation and planting, and documenting the activities of the project. In the summer of 2007, *Rudbeckia* was interplanted into the existing plant mix for an immediate improvement in appearance. In the fall, the team cooperated to get the area for the fescue mix sprayed, tilled and planted. The meadow mix band and additional native plants will be planted in 2008 and the walkways will be laid out, mowed, and overseeded with fescue.

Development of a continuing maintenance plan - This is scheduled for 2008, to be done in collaboration with the Tech Farm staff and maintenance company.

Development of educational materials - Toni created temporary signs on why the area wasn't mowed, what a meadow is, and the potential benefits of a meadow, which were placed in the 2 beds in time for the NYSAES 125th celebration. She also created a poster on the meadow project that is displayed in the entryway at the Tech Farm.

Toni has been collecting resources and writing a list of questions as a framework for the fact sheet. We are currently working on this part of the project.

Implications:

While this project is oriented around a particular meadow and the creation of a homeowner fact sheet, there seems to be much broader interest in meadows and low growing fescue mixes as lawn alternatives. Brian presented the project to the Turf Team and generated quite a discussion on existing meadows and other materials that could be created from this project. Brian submitted a NE-IPM minigrant to expand on and distribute the fact sheet(s) that will be created.

We need to gather more detailed information on IPM implications of meadows and other lawn alternatives to ensure that commonly heard claims are in fact substantiated.

Landscape plan for Technology Farm meadow

