

# Prairie Restoration

By Clara Brown (12th grade)

Every year, Eco Club and the MHS field ecology and conservation class partner to make Mahtomedi more environmentally friendly. Last year, the club worked with the custodial staff to incorporate more compost and recycling options into the school lunchrooms. This year, the groups focused on the outside of the school by planning and planting a butterfly garden to help make the grounds more pollinator friendly.

Club members came up with the idea for the garden after realizing that a natural prairie area between the high school and middle school was removed during roadway reconstruction last summer. Natural prairie spaces and butterfly gardens provide safe places for pollinators to feed and lay eggs, which is essential to the crops and natural plants that we eat.

A lot of planning went into starting a healthy butterfly garden and the club worked hard to make it happen. This past winter, members of the Mahtomedi Garden Club met with the Eco Club to provide guidance and help pick plants for the garden. Most of the plants in the garden are native to Minnesota and require cold temperatures to begin growing. In February, the club planted the first seeds in recycled milk jugs and put them on the high school roof so they could get the necessary exposure. In the spring, students prepared the area for planting by pulling weeds, raking in manure, and planting and watering the seeds. More than 100 different species of native seeds were planted.

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