

Design and Establishment of Seed Mixes for Prairie Restoration Webinar

Rebecca Barak, PhD, Presenter

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Watch this PA Botany webinar on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MoN_SbDaV8

Abstract

Tallgrass prairie is one of the most endangered habitats on earth. Thankfully, prairie restoration can be used to gain back some lost acreage. However, restored prairies often fall short of restoration objectives and reference sites, and there are gaps between the research and practice of prairie restoration. Seed mixes are the raw materials for prairie restoration. They represent the potential biodiversity of a restored plant community. Once they are planted, species biology influences which species germinate, establish and persist at restored sites. This talk will discuss seed mix design for restoration from both an ecological and a social perspective. I will share results from a large biodiversity-restoration plot experiment targeting phylogenetic and functional diversity, and results of a survey of restoration practitioners to understand their seed mix design process. We hope that these results will help restoration researchers and practitioners better understand the seed mix design process, and further encourage collaboration between restoration researchers and practitioners.

Presenter

Rebecca Barak, Ph.D., *Conservation Scientist, Chicago Botanic Garden*

Becky Barak is a conservation scientist at Chicago Botanic Garden and faculty in the joint graduate program in Plant Biology and Conservation at Northwestern University and Chicago Botanic Garden. Becky studies biodiversity and restoration in the tallgrass prairie, with a focus on seed and seedling biology and seed mix design. Prior to her current position, Becky was a David H. Smith Conservation Fellow, where she studied restoration decision making from a social science perspective. Becky is a co-founder and project lead of Plant Love Stories (www.plantlovestories.com), a project that shares stories about the plants that impact our lives.