

7/05/22 City Commission meeting

- Pubic comments

My name is Judie Storandt. My husband Peter and I live at 105 Race St.

We also are the owners of the vacant lots next to Daylight Donuts on W. Central Ave. -- where a large rock with a round hole in it was recently installed.

Our Facebook page is “Restoring Roots Prairie Artscape”.

I’m here to talk about a **growing trend to replace lawns with gardens - and to use native grasses and flowers** – whether in landscape beds or containers – sometimes mixing them with other plants.

Driving around town, it’s a pleasure to see so many homes and local businesses using native plants in their landscaping. We are a Flinthills City” - making El Dorado a tourist destination.

This trend is likely inspired by the **many benefits of native plants** – compared to traditional turf lawns.

Generally speaking:

- mature native plants
- cost less and
- are easier to maintain.

7 BENEFITS

1. First, native plants (grasses and flowers) are drought resistant. You do not need to water them - which will become increasingly important as water becomes more scarce and expensive.
2. Second, large native-plant gardens planted instead of a lawn, **do not need to be mowed** on a regular basis. When mature, they are mowed only once a year - typically in the early spring. That reduces noise and air pollution, the cost of fuel for lawn mowers, and personal time spent mowing
3. Third, large native gardens do not need **fertilizer or herbicides**. That saves you money and time. That helps keep our ground water safe.
4. Fourth, many native plants help to keep **garden pests** at bay (e.g. Mugworts, Lemon grass, some mints, alliums).
5. Fifth, natives produce their own seeds – there is no need to seed. That saves you money and time.
6. Sixth, some natives are pollinators that attract bees & butterflies – necessary for local crops to thrive.
7. Seventh, spending time in nature settings promotes well being and good mental health.

The City Ordinance that regulates “**Tall Grass and Weeds**” – was adopted at a time when people didn’t take care of their yards. The City Code sets a max. 6” height requirement for grasses and weeds – in turf lawns and unintended vegetation in sidewalk cracks, etc.

- Native plants typically grow higher than 6” when mature.
- But the current ordinance defines native plants as “weeds” to be kept mowed under 6”.
- Tall grasses in the Flinthills tall grass prairie ecosystem grow over 4’.
- We have encouraged the City to make the Code more **native-plant friendly** by exempting native plants from the 6” height requirement, and raising the 6” max height restriction.