

My little patch of prairie

adapted from an article by Brent Olson

1 This prairie project — man, it's getting to me. The problem started when my kids grew up. With three teenagers in the house, I didn't worry about the lawn. If things got shaggy, I pointed my finger at whoever looked the most content and sent him or her out to mow. But the kids grew up, my wife has a job in town, we sold the goats, and one morning I looked out and saw 5 acres of lawn that needed to be mowed and I was the only one home.

2 That's when I started thinking about the wonders of native grasses. Just let the prairie grow, and buffalo and wildfires will keep it healthy. It sounded perfect — being lazy while 9 to be ecologically sound.

3 But this was my problem. The seed mix I planted had 33 varieties of seeds. That's 32 varieties more than I'm used to seeing in a field. Three decades of farming taught me that anything in a cornfield that isn't corn is a weed. I have vivid memories of my father growling, "A tree in the wrong place is just a weed. If it sticks up or sticks out, whack it off." Simple rules that are easy to live by. So what am I supposed to do with this anarchy growing outside my windows? I can't even tell what's supposed to be there and what isn't.



4 The first year nothing grew. I was glad I lived a quarter mile from the closest road. Visitors would check out the bare dirt baking in the sun where the lawn used to be. It was scattered with outbreaks of scrawny vegetation, and I could see the questions in their eyes. I would be preemptive, saying, "Yes, this is my new prairie, a haven for wildlife and a thing of beauty for my soul." Most people just patted my shoulder and changed the subject.

5 I almost dug it up a couple of times, but a friend who'd gone through the same process advised patience. "Sleep, creep, leap," he said. This is prairie shorthand for how native grasses establish themselves. 12 it's something wildflower salesmen say because three years is the statute of limitations for fraudulently selling lint dust as seeds. My friend said it would be three years before I would know how things were going to turn out.

6 Seeing the results this year 13. Grass has sprouted and little blossoms are appearing hither and yon. I chopped down some tall, ungainly weedy-looking things only to find the survivors sprouting lovely purple flowers.

7 Maybe sticking up or sticking out doesn't have to be a bad thing. Maybe a little patience is in order. Maybe a little chaos is a good thing.

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Tekst 3 My little patch of prairie

- 1p 8 “This prairie project – man, it’s getting to me.” (eerste zin)
8 Uit welke zin later in de tekst blijkt dat de schrijver op het punt heeft gestaan het project te stoppen?
Citeer de eerste twee woorden van deze zin.
- 1p 9 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 2?
A forgetting
B pretending
C refusing
- 1p 10 What becomes clear about the writer in paragraph 3?
A He and his father disagreed on how to run a farm.
B He disliked having to do any work in the garden.
C He feared he had bought seeds of inferior quality.
D He needed to reconsider his ideas about gardening.
E He used to strongly disapprove of orderly lawns.
- 1p 11 How did the writer feel about his project at first, according to paragraph 4?
A confident
B confused
C embarrassed
D relaxed
- 1p 12 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 5?
A Either that or
B Even though
C In other respects
D Under the circumstances
- 1p 13 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 6?
A has been a lesson for me
B has made me look a fool
C makes me doubt even more
D proves I do not have green fingers

Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.