

HortEcology:

Lessons from Wild Plant Communities

Kelly D. Norris

threeoaksgarden.com • kellydnorris.com • dmbotanicalgarden.com

The Nature of Planting

- What does naturalistic planting really mean? Does it mean a planting evokes nature, perhaps only as an illusion? Maybe it mimics nature? Does it translate natural function into a legible, intentional result?
- Gardens are refugia for life. Research (Wintle et al., 2018) increasingly underscores the importance of small, patchy habitats for the conservation of biodiversity globally.
- The context and scale of plantings does not limit the extent of their naturalism. If employed as an adjective, naturalistic planting isn't merely a style or the answer to *why* you garden, but a profound reconsideration of *how* to garden.

The Lessons

Consider the following questions for each lesson:

- *How does this inform planting design and applying plants to landscape?*
- *How does this shift horticultural thinking from maintenance to management?*
- *How does this change the user experience?*

Plant Survival

Density and Longevity

Plant Sociality and Communities

Patterns and Distributions