

**Description**

- a distinct area (min. 500 sq. ft) - made of grasses, flowering perennials and self-seeding plants typically found in country fields & urban vacant lots -provides habitat for butterflies, insects & birds

**Purpose**

- to provide a **hands-on laboratory for students to use all**

**senses while immersed in an un-manicured natural environment**

- a place to: collect seed pods, pick flowers, investigate parts of a plant, listen for birds, count insects - see examples of seasonal change and long term ecological dynamics - to be used for building vocabulary, practicing math and writing skills, improving

observational skills, as catalyst for reading, and to inspire an appreciation for nature...

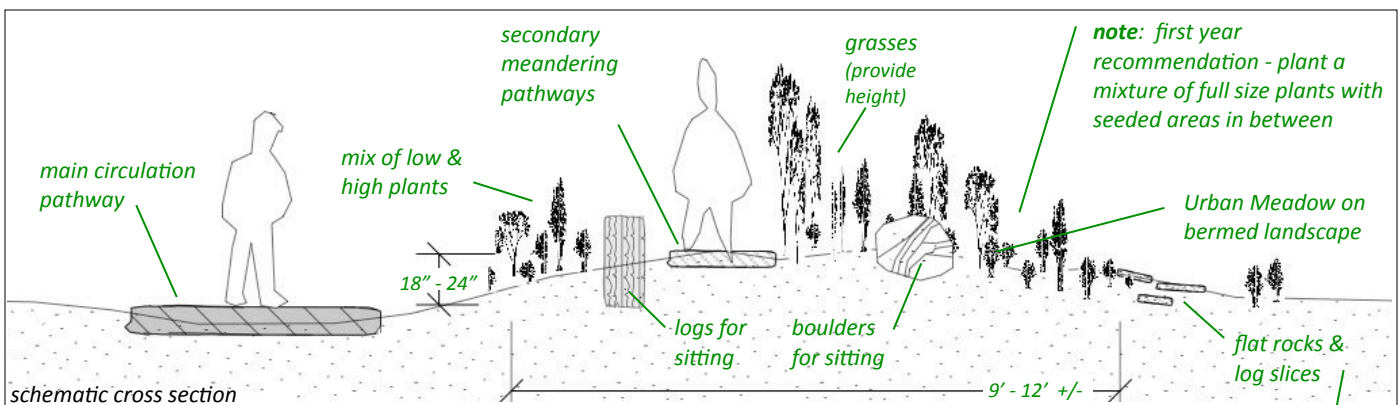
**Considerations**

- **green practices** - design so run-off water replenishes beds, use plants that may filter water & prevent soil runoff, use native plantings; local sourcing of materials; etc. (rain garden)

**Design checklist**

- design as a large mass island bed of 500 sq. ft or more in area, rather than a bordering strip bed
- secondary meandering pathways (stepping stones) - to encourage immersion within the meadow and to find places to seating and observe
- dispersed seating (5+ locations) for individuals and small groups
- on boulders and stumps (cedar or locust)
- include flat stones and decomposing log slices for students to turn over to find worms and bugs.
- mound & shape landscape to increase opportunity for unexpected discovery (18" to 24")
- exposure: full sun
- a diversity of plants (see BSI Workbook Plant List & Seed Mix specification)
- plantings allow for annual spring cutting back to ground
- soil - good drainage & 12"+ depth of new soil (to assist plant species variation)
- consider rain garden design in low areas (see green practice page)

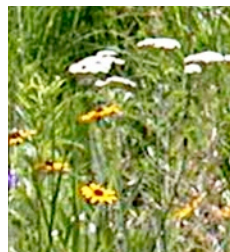
**Illustrations**



Urban meadow in fall



milkweed pods



Queen Anne's lace & late blooming black eye susan



grasses add dramatic scale (miscanthus)



seeking bugs under a loose rock (along side, but not in, a walking path)