Article from Peggy Therault, Grant County Master Gardener Volunteer

August 24, 2016

I asked members for some before and after pictures of some recent projects and Peggy Therault sent me this info on project she is started:

I got Roy Diblik’s book for Christmas.  I wanted to try one of his plantings.  I didn’t want and couldn’t afford to take on a 10 by 14 plot which is what he shows in his book.  So, I just took a five by five corner of one plan.  This sits in a mostly sunny dry corner by the driveway entrance that is difficult to get into with the mower.  I wanted a low maintenance and drought tolerant plan.

 I covered the area with feed bags and chicken manure compost in early April.  When I checked it the grass and weeds were gone and the bags had decomposed.  Spring flower bulbs will fill in between the plants.  I topped it off after planting with a light layer of compost.

I asked Peggy, the names of the plants:

* Two spring moor grass, Sesleria caerulea, next to one side of the fence
* Two prairie drop seed in the front and center
* Along the other side of the fence are three betony, Stachys officinalis ‘Hummelo’

I asked her what about mulch and this was her response:

The soil was not tilled.  The author discourages tilling.  He is very much opposed to traditional mulch, and recommends local composted shredded leaf mulch,  or mowing the planting with a mulching mower for cleanup.  Then leaving the debris on the planting.  For the first two years of the planting, the nurturing period, he recommends hoeing twice a month.

For watering, he recommends a deep watering when planted and watering an inch once a week during the nurturing period.  I put down a layer of compost after planting, and I still have to get and plant the bulbs.  I’m going to leave it at that for this fall.  These were some pretty tough, healthy plants.  My planting is much smaller than his plans.  I’m most worried about quack grass creeping in from the edge of the planting.