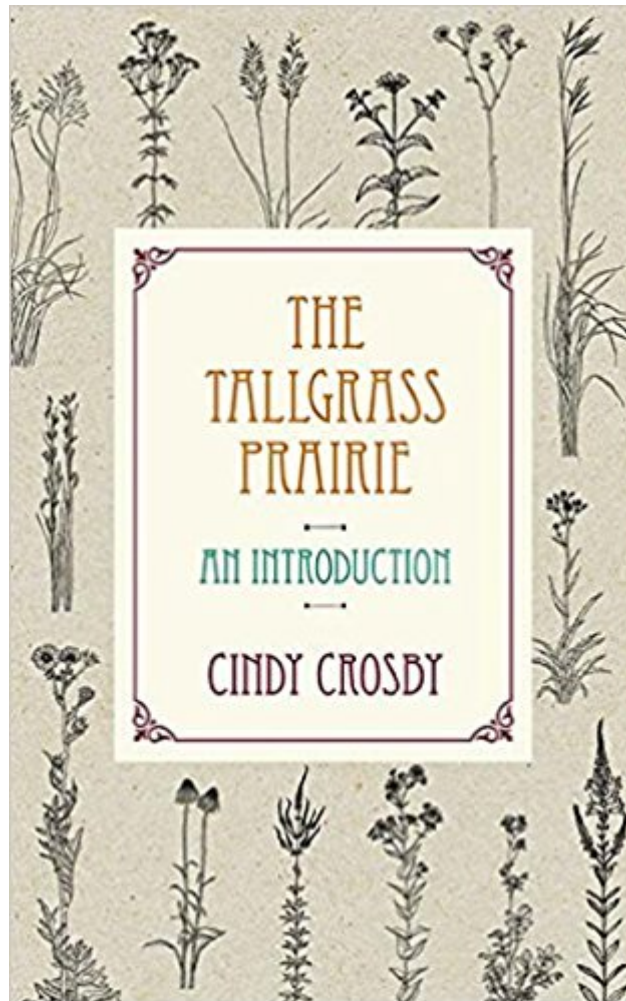


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# The Tallgrass Prairie: An Introduction



## Synopsis

More than a region on a map, North America's vast grasslands are an enduring place in the American heart. Unfolding along and beyond the Mississippi River, the tallgrass prairie has entranced and inspired its natives and newcomers as well as American artists and writers from Willa Cather to Mark Twain. The Tallgrass Prairie is a new introduction to the astonishing beauty and biodiversity of these iconic American spaces. ã ã Like a walking tour with a literate friend and expert, Cindy Crosby's Tallgrass Prairie prepares travelers and armchair travelers for an adventure in the tallgrass. Crosby's ã ã engaging gateway assumes no prior knowledge of tallgrass landscapes, and she acquaints readers with the native plants they'll discover there. She demystifies botanic plant names and offers engaging mnemonic tips for mastering Latin names with verve and confidence. Visitors to the prairie will learn to identify native plants using the five senses to discover what makes each plant unique or memorable. In the summer, for example, the unusual square stem of cup plant, *Silphium perfoliatum*, sets it apart from its neighbors. And its distinctive leaf cups water after the rain. ã ã A gifted raconteur, Crosby tells stories about how humankind has adopted the prairie as a grocery, an apothecary, and even as a shop for love charms. Rounding out this exceptional introduction are suggestions for experiencing the American prairie, including journaling techniques and sensory experiences, tips for preparing for a hike in tallgrass landscapes, ways to integrate native prairie plants into home landscapes (without upsetting the neighbors), and a wealth of resources for further exploration. ã ã An instant classic in the tradition of American naturalist writing, The Tallgrass Prairie will delight not only scholars and policy makers, but guests to tallgrass prairie preserves, outdoors enthusiasts and gardeners, and readers interested in American ecosystems and native plants.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"We desperately need ambassadors to help us reach those who haven't yet been introduced to prairies and the many remarkable organisms who live in them. Cindy Crosby is just such an ambassador, and her *The Tallgrass Prairie: An Introduction* should help grow the legion of dedicated land stewards and supporters of our native grasslands."

•Chris Helzer, author of *The Prairie Ecologist* blog and director of science, Nebraska program, The Nature Conservancy

"For years, I have waited for a book like this! Here, at last, is a beautifully written, informative, and personally engaging introduction for those who are just discovering the beauty of the prairies. Like the tallgrass itself, these pages are full of marvels that engage, at once, the intellect, the senses, and the collective capacity for wonder. It is truly a gift to us all."

•John T. Price, author of *Daddy Long Legs: The Natural Education of a Father* and editor of *The Tallgrass Prairie Reader*

"Cindy Crosby is extremely knowledgeable about the prairie, and she also adores it. She is not only a skilled naturalist but also a sensitive writer. This unique combination gives *The Tallgrass Prairie: An Introduction* a powerful language that is both direct and lyrical, full of insightful practical advice, engaging storytelling, aesthetic splendor, and even spiritual inspiration."

•Thomas Dean, senior presidential writer/editor and adjunct assistant professor at the University of Iowa, editor of *The Grace of Grass and Water*, and author of *Under a Midland Sky* "Both timeless and timely, *The Tallgrass Prairie* is an excellent gateway into the field of tallgrass prairie conservation, restoration, and appreciation. It's a call to arms; to value and protect prairie ecosystems."

•Emily Yates, Chicago Botanic Garden

"Part field guide and part natural history, Cindy Crosby's new work is a remarkably engaging introduction to the tallgrass prairie. Her analysis of the prairie's ecology, and her reflections on its history, are deftly woven together by a delightfully personal narrative voice, which opens the book to a wide readership."

•Tom Montgomery Fate, author of *Cabin Fever: A Suburban Father's Search for the Wild*

"Crosby provides broad array of basic information about the tallgrass prairie from its origin to how to plant a prairie in your backyard. Included are a sampling of the plants and animals, how to collect seed, prescribed fire and what to wear on a prairie walk. While intended for the budding prairie novice, those with background in prairie will also find it interesting. I have been roaming and studying prairies for more than fifty years

and I learned a few things. • Daryl Smith, professor of biology, prairie advocate, and founder of the Tallgrass Prairie Center, University of Northern Iowa • “The Tallgrass Prairie: An Introduction is a warm welcome to an amazing landscape. Although written for the newcomer, it reminds me of the great joy I felt as the as the marvelous puzzle of prairie slowly unfolded in my life. Ms. Crosby writes with joy and astonishment. • Bernie Buchholz, president, Friends of Nachusa Grasslands • “A fine introduction to the prairie that is fun to read. • Bill Kleiman, project director, Nachusa Grasslands, The Nature Conservancy • “When I started as a volunteer, I had little experience doing prairie restoration. I had many questions about restoring prairie, including basic concepts about prairie. Cindy Crosby has put together the prairie primer I wish I had. This book should be given to all volunteers, whether new or experienced! • John Heneghan, Illinois prairie steward • “A fine, and much needed, primer to the whys, whats, and ways of prairie and prairie restoration • I plan on giving this book to many people over the years to come. • Susan Kleiman, environmental educator, Byron Forest Preserve •

CINDY CROSBY is a steward supervisor for the Schulenberg Prairie at the Morton Arboretum and a steward at Nachusa Grasslands, a Nature Conservancy site. She is a writer, teacher, and lecturer on the tallgrass prairie and nature conservation. •

The Primer for Prairie Restoration. If you have any interest in Praries but don't know much about them, this book is for you. It gives the basics about Prairies and why we need them. It gives the basics of Prairie restoration and what occurs in restoring Prairie. I wish this book was around when I became interested in Prarie Restoration.

I received a free electronic copy of this informative book from Netgalley, Cindy Crosby, and Northwest University Press in exchange for an honest review. Thank you all for sharing your hard work with me. This is an excellent guide to understanding the intricate balance of the tallgrass prairie, which covers the midwestern plains from Canada to Mexico, though the native and restored prairie are a mere patchwork of preserved islands in a grand sea of people and their immediate needs. Though only very small sections of New Mexico and West Texas are of the tallgrass designation, we do have and visit it often, and try to preserve what we can in the Leopold fashion. If you have a love of the wild and visit it often, please read this book. The etiquette involved in both

preserving and visiting this precious threatened land is explained very well, as is restoring the natural balance on land that has been utilized for human needs, and then restored.

Cindy Crosby packs a lot of information into this slim little book. It is a great primer for anyone new to the prairie. With a conversational tone and straightforward style, the author takes readers on a virtual tour with the goal of helping people appreciate the subtle beauty of the prairie, and see it as an important and but often overlooked part of the Illinois landscape. By covering a bit about history, a bit about plants and animals, and a bit about conservation, the book provides a comprehensive overview and equips readers to see the prairie in a new light, to slow down and really notice it.

Cindy Crosby's "The Tallgrass Prairie" will get you hooked right at her Introduction. No matter what your experience of prairie has been so far, you'll find that you want to hear what she's got to say. Cindy's inviting style draws you in. The book is friendly: full of information that is easy to take in. I'm used to taking daily walks on a variety of nature trails, but now I plan to sometimes seek out tallgrass prairies. This book will be the perfect companion.

An excellent guide for beginners to understand and love tallgrass prairie as well as starter tips for managing and restoring it.

Reading Cindy Crosby's The Tallgrass Prairie - An Introduction, is like sitting on the back porch swing having a conversation! As a prairie novice, my interest in tallgrass prairies has reached the highest peaks! Nancy Elbrink

Awesome book! Cindy has a great way of handing out her extensive knowledge of the Tallgrass Prairie in a way that's easy to understand and fun! If you're reading this review, you NEED this book.....

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