

Southern Michigan Succession Perennial Grass Community

The Perennial Grass Community is characterized by grasses which mostly cover the ground. This stage usually lasts for 1 to 12 years. It usually starts suddenly but disappears gradually to the next stage. Mowing, light grazing, or yearly burning can prolong this stage so that it can be considered a Climax Community.

There is the beginning of soil formation with the decay of dead plants and animals. Many of the plants are perennials, plants which, once sprouted, grow and flower year after year until competed out of the community. Usually, the top of the perennial plant dies each fall, giving the appearance of a dead plant, but the root and a few leaves at the base survive for the next year. Most of these perennials are grasses. Grass is a group of plants with narrow leaves with parallel veins. The leaf wraps around the stem but with a slit on the reverse side. This protects the growing point or meristem of the grass below the leaves helping the grass to survive burning. Grass usually spreads by rhizomes as well as by seed.

The plants and animals which are examples of this community in Southern Tuscola County include:

PLANTS	ANIMALS
Bluegrass, <i>Poa pratensis</i>	Ants, <i>Camponotus herculeanus</i>
Blackeyed Susan, <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Bob white, <i>Citellus virginianus</i>
Buffalo clover, <i>Trifolium stoloniferum</i>	Chipping sparrow, <i>Spizella passerina</i>
Burdock, <i>Arctium minus</i>	
Canada thistle, <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Flies, <i>Musca domestica</i>
Common mullein, <i>Verbascum thapsus</i>	Garden spider, <i>Araneus diadematus</i>
European Daisy, <i>Bellis perennis</i>	Garter snake, <i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>
Field dodder, <i>Cuscuta pentagona</i>	Kingbird, <i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>
Milfoil, <i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Leaf hoppers, <i>Platymetopius acutus</i>
Orange hawkweed, <i>Heiracium aurantiacum</i>	Meadow lark, <i>Sturnella magna</i>
Prickley lettuce, <i>Loctum scariola</i>	Mosquito, <i>Culex pipiens</i>
Quackgrass, <i>Agrapyron repens</i>	Ribbon snake, <i>T. sauritus sauritus</i>
Red sorrel, <i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Scavenger beetles, <i>Lathyrilidae sp.</i>
Sweet clover, <i>Melilotus alba</i>	Sparrow hawk, <i>Falco sparverius</i>
Timothy <i>Phleum pratense</i>	Spittle bug, <i>Lepyronia quadramgii; aros</i>
Yellow hawkweed, <i>Heiracium pratense</i>	Thirteen-lined ground squirrel, <i>Citellus tridecemlineatus</i>
	Turkey vulture, <i>Cathartes aura</i>
	Velvet mite, <i>Trombididae sp.</i>
	Weasel, <i>Mustela sp.</i>
	White footed mouse, <i>Ferociscus leucopus</i>

