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### ***The Sustainable Prisons Project***

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You usually learn about sustainable living in glossy design magazines or hip blogs (ahem, Cool Green Science!), but **prison seems an unlikely source to find eco-inspiration.**

Until now.

The offenders at the Stafford Creek Corrections Center in Washington are going green through a partnership with The Evergreen State College and The Nature Conservancy. **The project is saving money and resources and helping enrich lives.**

Dr. Nalini Nadkarni, a faculty member at Evergreen and a Washington trustee for The Nature Conservancy, started the **Sustainable Prisons Project** in an attempt to cultivate tree mosses to supply the floral industry. Growing mosses with the help of offenders reduced the amount of natural mosses harvested from the Olympic rainforest.

Now the program works in two Washington prisons, where offenders learn how to raise endangered Oregon spotted frogs, reclaim wastewater, recycle on a massive scale, nurture honeybees and **propagate rare and threatened prairie wildflowers**.

The Nature Conservancy works with Stafford Creek to grow threatened prairie perennials—Conservancy staff supply the seeds and teach interested offenders how to plant them. The manpower is helping the Conservancy sow 200,000 seeds, doubling our capacity! After the plants grow, we'll plant them as part of our efforts to restore Washington's native prairies.

The partnership helps our prairies, but perhaps even more rewarding, it helps offenders develop important skills to use when they re-enter society. And **if a prison can go green, save money and enrich lives, what's stopping the rest of us?**

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*(Photo: Offenders at Stafford Creek plant native prairie seeds. Source: Daeg Byrne/TNC.)*