

# Wildflower Meadow

## DIY Guide



Wildflower meadows are a great way to add colour and diversity into your garden. They are low maintenance, can flower within weeks of planting, and are a great way to get a group involved in nature conservation. If you don't like the idea of a meadow, perhaps introduce wildflower plugs such as selfheal, clover or buttercups into a closely cut lawn, or relax your mowing schedule.

### When do I plant?

You can either plant in spring (April) after the frosts or in autumn (September). Autumn seeding is generally best if you can plan ahead as some seeds need winter dormancy before growth.

### How much should I plant?

The bigger the better but even tiny patches of meadow will help wildlife! Make sure you don't overcrowd: 0.5-1g of wildflower seeds is plenty for 1m<sup>2</sup> of meadow. You can also buy mixes with grasses included for a more 'natural' look.

Comma butterfly (top) and honey bee on marjoram (bottom)

### What should I plant?

A mixture of spring and summer meadows is best but keep them separate as they require different management.

*Spring meadow:* birds foot trefoil, bluebell, bugle, buttercup, cornflower, cowslip, forget-me-nots, foxglove, fritillary, primrose, red valerian, selfheal, violets.

*Summer meadow:* agrimony, betony, bugloss, campion, chamomile, cranesbill, knapweed, lady's bedstraw, lavender, mallow, maiden pink, ox-eye daisy, red clover, scabious, teasel, vetch.

Try to buy local, native varieties or opt for a specialist online retailer. If you know someone with a meadow, why not swap seeds?

**Still not convinced?** Why not plant a spring meadow which you can then cut for a neat summer lawn...





# How to transform a lawn into meadow

(if you're starting with bare ground, skip to step 4)

1. Choose a sunny, well-drained area.
2. If there are existing shrubs, thin them out so that there is bare ground. If you have lawn/ grass, remove squares of grass by cutting with a spade and lifting from below.
3. If you have really rich soil you may need to remove an extra 5-10cm of topsoil so that your wildflowers won't get outcompeted by grasses!
4. Once you have cleared an area, loosely rake the soil.
5. Now you can scatter your seeds! Mix with sand first so that you get an even coverage and can see where you've already scattered.
6. Loosely rake the soil again to cover the seeds and then use a roller (or your feet!) to gently firm the area. Make sure you don't walk away with any seeds on your shoes!
7. Make sure they are well watered for the first fortnight, and remove any nearby grasses or other plants that may steal nutrients!
8. Sit back and enjoy! Be sure to send us some photos of the meadow or any of its residents!

## Management

Cut your meadow in late Feb/early March to remove any grass growth. Your next cut will be after the main flowering period of your meadow. If you have a spring meadow, cut in late June/July. If you have a summer meadow, cut in September.

During the first year or in fertile soils, an extra cut may be necessary in July for a summer meadow to remove grasses. Spring meadows can be kept short after July. It is useful to leave the cuttings on the lawn for a day or two to allow the seeds to disperse, but before they break down.

Try to use your judgement with the meadow. You want to cut it once the flowers have seeded but before they start breaking down. However, if you have a lot of weeds, cut before they get a chance to self seed. Also, try not to cut your meadow all at once as this will deprive wildlife of food.

**Don't let dead plants build up as this will increase the nutrient level and encourage nettles, thistles and brambles.**



## KEEP IN TOUCH!

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