

Sowing and Maintaining Wild Flower Areas

Sourcing Seed:

Always sow UK native wild flowers sourced from a UK grower.

When to Sow:

March and April or September if soil is light and well drained

Preparation:

It's best to allow up to 6 weeks for the soil to settle after preparation and prior to sowing. This also allows any weed seeds to germinate, which can then be removed with a hoe.

Prepare the ground by clearing away all existing plants and grass. It's particularly important to remove vigorous perennial weeds such as stinging nettles, docks and couch grass. This is best done by hand.

Dig the soil over and firm it well before raking to create a level seed bed. Don't incorporate any fertilisers or manure as this encourages grass growth which crowds out the wild flowers.

Sowing:

1 gram of pure wild flower seed is enough for 1 square metre of soil. Mixtures of wild flower seeds and grasses should be sown at 5g per square metre. Mix the wild flower seed with dry fine sand to help you see where you've been and make your distribution more even.

Rake the area lightly after sowing and cover with netting to protect from birds and cats. Ensure the soil is kept moist during hot and/or dry periods for the best germination.

Maintenance:

A wild flower area should be cut quite regularly in its first year, not like a lawn. Aim to make cuts every 8 weeks to a height no lower than 5cm (2"). This encourages the young plants to form good root systems and controls any annual weeds which crop up.

In subsequent years cut late July to September to give late wild flowers a chance to set seed. Make cuts to 5-7.5cm (2-3"). Leave the cuttings where they are for a few days to allow wildflower seeds to drop before collecting and composting the remains.

If there is strong re-growth in the autumn, make another cut in late autumn to weaken the grasses.