

Establishment & Maintenance

Site and soil preparation

Key to remember:

Typically speaking, wildflowers prefer low fertility soils as more vigorous weeds will outcompete the flora. However, this does not mean that wildflowers can only be sown onto low fertility soils, there is simply more management required with a higher weed burden present.

Starting with a weed-free seed bed is essential to reduce competition from other plants. This will be the most significant factor impacting success of establishment.

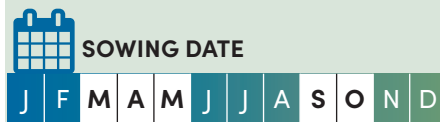
Recommended sow rate: 3 – 5 g/m²

Spring or Autumn Sowing:

While sowing can occur at either timing, generally speaking, the preferred time for sowing is in the Autumn as this mirrors nature more accurately and provides more reliable results with lower weed burden. Most perennial wildflower require vernalisation, a long period of cold, to achieve germination. It can be common for some perennials to not be seen within

Cornfield Annuals as a Nursery Crop

When sowing a perennial mix the addition of cornfield annuals can be used as a nursery crop to reduce weed ingress in the Spring. Annuals have greater vigour than perennials in the first year which will compete against spring weeds while perennials are slow to establish. They also add more colour in the first flowering year.



the first flowering year, especially when vernalisation is not achieved.

Spring sowing success is reliant on the weather. In a cold spring wildflowers can be slow to establish and therefore at higher risk of competition from spring germinating arable weeds. However, if warm with moderate rainfall, similar results can be seen as in Autumn sowing.

Sowing Method:

1. Cultivate the area
2. Spray off with Glyphosate, at manufacturers instruction, to remove any weeds which have flushed following cultivation. Alternatively, a light cultivation can be used to reduce vigour of flushed weeds instead of chemical application, at lower success rate. *Repeat as required to create weed free seed bed*
3. Ring roll to create pockets of moisture
4. Mix seed well in a bag before planting. For small areas, add dry sand to aid sowing, 1 part seed to 2 parts sand
5. Broadcast or drill into clean weed-free seedbed
6. Flat roll, after drilling, or cross ring roll, after broadcasting, to improve the seed-to-soil contact

Maintenance

It is essential with all maintenance cuts, that all cuttings are removed from the site as, if left, this will increase fertility and weed burden. Control perennial weeds by roughing or spot spraying with glyphosate.

Year 1

Allow seed to establish but keep growth to around 20cm to top off potential weeds and allow less dominant species space to grow in to.

Year 2

Leave the meadow to grow naturally during the flowering season until end of season maintenance managed by mechanical means or grazing.

Following Years

Treat much as advised in year 2, the completion of the end of season cut, and the possible addition of mid-season, May/June, cut and remove at 8-10" height to address issue of high species dominance or high growth.

Sow Rate Conversion

g/m ²	kg/ha	kg/acre
1	10	4
2	20	8
3	30	12
4	40	16
5	50	20



Wildflower Establishment Timeline

SPRING SOWING						
	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Typical Characteristics	Recommended Maintenance
	Flowering period			Winter dormancy		
Year 1	Sowing March to April. Grasses to grow first	Flowers and grasses will establish, mostly annual species with some perennials beginning to emerge	Annual maintenance cut recommended through mechanical means	Plants go dormant for winter. Perennials will break dormancy through vernalisation ready for germination in the spring	Year 1 is predominantly grasses, annuals and few perennials will flower with higher weed burden risk	Spot weed control, higher risk with Spring sowing
Year 2	Perennials will germinate alongside grasses and some annuals	Hardy perennials, Oxeye Daisy & Common Knapweed dominate space. Few annuals may have self-seeded from year 1	Annual maintenance cut through mechanical means or grazing	Plants go dormant for winter	Hardy perennials will establish and dominate flowering. Few annuals may be seen from year 1	Continue spot control
Year 3	More perennials germinate as meadow begins to grow after Winter	Balance of colour between all species which will have matured providing equilibrium between species	Annual maintenance cut through mechanical means or grazing	Plants go dormant for winter	Meadow will begin to find balance between species going forward	Annual maintenance plus additional as required

AUTUMN SOWING						
	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Typical Characteristics	Recommended Maintenance
	Flowering period			Winter dormancy		
Year 1			Sowing late-August to September. Grasses establish first	Small amount of growth prior to plants going dormant for Winter. Perennials undergo vernalisation for dormancy breaking	Small amount of growth will be seen prior to Winter.	Minimal spot control subject to speed of growth
Year 2	Grasses, annuals and hardy perennials will begin to germinate/grow	A combination of grasses, annuals and hardy perennials will flower	Annual maintenance cut through mechanical means or grazing	Plants go dormant for winter	A mix of all species will establish during the flowering season. Of the perennials this will mostly be the fast growing species	Spot control of weeds
Year 3	More perennials germinate as meadow begins to grow after Winter	Balance of colour between all species which will have matured providing equilibrium between species	Annual maintenance cut through mechanical means or grazing	Plants go dormant for winter	Meadow will begin to find balance between species going forward	Annual maintenance plus additional as required

