



Devon
Wildlife Trust



Creating a wildflower meadow



with **Nextdoor Nature** 



This is the ultimate guide to creating and maintaining a wildflower meadow in your community!



Made possible by funding from The National Lottery Heritage fund, creating a legacy to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Wildflower meadows come in all shapes and sizes. Your meadow can be as small or large as you like. You can create wildflower strips, patches or if you are feeling creative, even create wildflower mazes!

How to make your wildflower meadow

For grassed areas, we recommend the strip and sow method.

- Choose the area you want to make your patch.
- Remove as much of any existing grass and other vegetation as you can. You should be left with a patch of bare earth. For grassed areas, take off the top layer of turf to create the bare patch.
- Rake the area to break up the soil surface.
- Get scattering the seeds over your patch. The seeds don't need to be buried, but walk over your patch to make sure the seed has good contact with the soil.

Top tip: Don't be tempted to 'help' your seed by adding artificial fertilisers, compost or manure. Wildflowers prefer poor soils to rich ones.



Digging off the top layer of grass to create a bare patch of soil.



What's the best seed mix?

The best seed mix is a mixture of native wildflowers (ideally 20%) and slow growing grasses (ideally 80%).

The seed mix should contain native wildflowers which will provide a great food source for pollinators including bees and butterflies.

The seeds should be tolerant to most soil types and site conditions, but be sure to pick a sunny spot to plant the seeds. Wildflowers need sunshine.

The wildflowers we recommend include;

- Yarrow
- Common Knapweed
- Wild carrot
- Hedge Bedstraw
- Ladies Bedstraw
- Oxeye Daisy
- Birdsfoot Trefoil
- Ribwort Plantain
- Selfheal
- Meadow Buttercup
- Common Sorrel
- Red Campion

No flowers in the first year, don't worry! The plants that don't flower in the first year will in the second year.

You are welcome to add annuals, such as cornflowers to add colour to your patch in the first year

The grasses we recommend include;

- Common Bent
- Smaller Cat's-tail
- Creeping Red
- Crested dogstail
- Smooth-stalked meadow grass



Yarrow
Credit: Vaughn Matthews



Oxeye Daisy
Credit: Gemma de Gouveia

Share your sowing story with us

We are asking all communities to share their sowing story, this could be through photos, videos, recordings or any creative means. You might also want to share this on your groups or local communities social media to celebrate your patch.

Please send your stories to us by email. You'll find contact details at the end of this booklet. Where we can we will pop along to your seed sow to say hello and capture the day!

These are our top tips for capturing your event:

- **Show your impact!** Get some before and after of the area where the wildflower seeds are planted. Make sure to send us photos when they are grown too!
- **Celebrate how much you've done together!** Snap pile of seeds, group of volunteers gathered or wide landscape shot of area dug and sown with seeds.
- **Take a different viewpoint!** A camera held at a low angle or macro shots can create interesting shots
- **Get filming!** Capture short (5-10 second) video clips – e.g. digging, sowing seeds.
- **Share!** Holding camera in landscape with 'subject' in middle will be best for social media posts
- **People** - for the photos shared with us we recommend that these be kept to hands and avoid faces of people taking part in the event.

Looking after your meadow

Your meadow won't need a lot of care and attention once it is established. A bit of regular maintenance should be all that is required. This includes:

- Regularly remove thistles, docks, tree seedlings and any grasses that look as though they are taking over the patch.
- You may want to 'top-up' your meadow in its first years of life, sowing more seeds to fill bare patches.
- The meadow can be cut each year in late August or September, with the cuttings left on the patch for around a week before removing and composting. This will allow the seeds to drop and replenish your meadow.
- As an alternative to cutting in late summer, leave the patch over winter before cutting in early spring. Your meadow's dead stems will provide excellent insect hibernation spaces over winter.

Risk assessment

You do a risk assessment before you do anything and you probably don't even realise you're doing it! It just refers to what you think about before you do something. You'll do them all the time – before you cross the road, for example.

We recommend you share your risk assessment with the group at the beginning of your planting session.

Get involved with Wilder Communities



If you want to help nature where you live and involve other people too – we want to hear from you! However big or small and whether it is just an idea or if you are doing something already – we are here to help!

We will be guided by you so whatever your idea is get in touch and we can see how we can help.

Contact our Wilder Communities team:



wildercommunities@devonwildlifetrust.org



devonwildlifetrust.org/wilder-communities

