



How to grow a wild patch

Wildflower

Summer

Spring

Pollinator

Butterfly

Bee

Whatever size your space, there's room for wildflowers. Set aside an area of lawn, part of a border or even a large

container.

Whether it's a planting pot, flowerbed, wild patch in your lawn or entire meadow, planting and sowing wildflowers provide vital resources to support a wide range of insects which otherwise couldn't survive in urban areas.

Let nature move in or sow your own wildflower patch; bring a touch of wild to your garden

Option 1 - Let your grass grow long

Simply let nature move in. Set aside some lawn and wait to see what arrives. The less pristine the lawn the more promising. Just raise the cutters on your mower to make some paths (it'll look more cared for) and leave the rest of the mowing until July or August.

Having long grass:

- Encourages different plant species to grow
- Helps insects thrive in the area
- Creates more feeding opportunities for local birds
- Helps to shelter small mammals and helps many creatures hibernate in winter

- Provides one of the rarest habitats in gardens



Leave your garden wild



Take a day off today and do nothing! Leave a wild spot in your garden by not mowing the lawn, or not weeding the paving – nature will love it!



www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

Option 2 - Start from scratch

The second option is to start from scratch on bare ground. Pick a poor patch of ground that hasn't been cultivated recently – wildflower meadows establish best on unproductive soil. It's worth checking what sort of soil you have and its pH before you choose which seeds to sow, as wildflower seed merchants supply mixtures suitable for various soil types and situations.

If your soil fertility is too high for perennial wildflowers to flourish, consider sowing

a cornfield annual mix that includes plants like cornflower, corn poppy, corn marigold and corncockle, with some barley and wheat seed to add an authentic touch!

- Control weeds by digging or rotovating, burying any vegetation to a depth of 15-20cm (6-8in). This also brings less fertile soil to the surface.
- Firm and rake the surface to make a seedbed.
- Don't be tempted to add manure or fertiliser as this will encourage excessive vigour in the grasses which then swamp the wildflowers. This is the most important principle in establishing a wildflower meadow.
- Sow in autumn. This gives the seed time to settle in over winter, unless on heavy clay (in which case, better wait till spring). Even large areas can be sown by hand quite easily. Ensure that the seed is scattered evenly by sowing half lengthways and the remaining half widthways across the plot. Mixing the seed with silver sand makes the process easier. Rake in lightly and water thoroughly.



Maintaining

During the first year it's essential to get the mowing regime right. Cut to 5-7cm (2-2 1/2in) whenever the height reaches 10-20cm (4-8in). The number of mows required can range from one to four. Control assertive weeds like thistles, nettles and docks by hand-weeding or spot-treating with a wildlife-friendly herbicide.

After this, a couple of cuts a year should be enough. Once in late July/early August and then again in early autumn. After mowing, always leave the clippings for a couple of days to drop any seed and then rake up and remove to keep soil fertility down.

Top tips

1. Be careful when mowing - small mammals, amphibians and reptiles may be hiding in the grass. Some birds nest in larger meadows so as a precaution don't mow until after the beginning of August.
2. Wildflowers are available in plug form and in ready-planted turf rolls, which can make establishing the plants even easier.
3. Sow a mix of wild grass and wild flower seed. Here are some ideas:

- Common or lesser knapweed
- Yellow rattle
- Ox-eye daisy
- Field scabious
- Harebell, Scottish bluebell
- Cock's-foot
- Sheep's fescue
- Yorkshire fog
- Wild thyme
- Lady's bedstraw
- Lawn chamomile
- Red clover
- Black knapweed
- Common spotted orchid



- Birds-foot-trefoil
- Bulbous buttercup



Who we are

[About us](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Jobs](#)

The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts

**Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire**



Support us

[Join us](#)

[Donate](#)

[Volunteer](#)



[Accessibility](#) / [Privacy Policy](#) / [Complaints procedure](#)

Protecting local wildlife

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust Registered Charity Number 204330, Company Registered Number 00680007