

Instructions for a wild flower meadow



A wildflower meadow is a very good alternative to the lawn:

It is **environmentally friendly**, because it offers food and shelter to many bees, butterflies and other insects.

It is **easy to maintain**, because it only rarely needs to be mowed. A flower meadow does not require irrigation and it needs no fertilizer; there won't be any foam to remove.

As a bonus, you can benefit from a beautiful and colorful sight.



seeds

location

before...

sowing

It is imperative to use **endemic plant seeds that are adapted to the location**. The insects living in our regions are adapted to and often specialized in the plant species that naturally grow here.

Flowers from afar, or those whose many petals hide the pollen and make it inaccessible (“double flowers”), mostly do not offer food to our insects. Some foreign species may even repel local flowers - thus, from a good intention, a problem is created: regional biodiversity decreases rather than persists.

Therefore, be careful with commercially available seed blends – they are colorful, but they do not please our local biodiversity, insects and other animals.

Look up at ounipestiziden.lu to find out where to obtain locally adapted seeds. These seeds are not always cultivated without pesticides, since some species are quite sensitive to diseases in monocultures of seed production. Yet this sensitivity does not exist in the varied population of a flower meadow.



location

before...

sowing

help

Virtually every site is suitable for a flowering meadow: from a very sunny spot to a shady surface, from poor to clayey and nutritious soils.

It is true that the drier, sunnier and leaner the location, the greater the diversity of species. The lack of water and nutrients gives wildflowers a competitive edge over most grasses.

If you are not sure whether your soil is too nutrient-rich, you can take a soil sample. The soil may be left in its original state, but it can also be emaciated by intermixing sand.

In any case, the flower seeds mixture is to be selected according to the soil conditions: completely different flowers grow on a sandy soil than on a clay soil.

If the location is heavily contaminated with perennial herbs, you can remove 30-40 cm of soil and then fill with a lean 0/16 gravel substrate.

Artificial sites such as traffic islands are preferably filled with ballast substrate and not with topsoil.

Only in very shady locations (e.g. under a dense tree cover) is it hardly possible to get a flower meadow.



before...

sowing

help

patience!

Before sowing, the soil must be prepared as a fine seedbed. **The soil must be clear of all vegetation.** Large areas must be plowed and then worked several times with the rotary cultivator, with spacings of a few weeks between each tillage work.

Shortly before sowing, the soil should not be worked deeper than 3 cm; the last deep work must be more than a month old. The reason for this is that seeds of perennial herbs, which are still present in the soil, begin to germinate as soon as they are brought up to the light of the surface.

If you want to make only a small corner of meadow, just remove the old layer of grass or plants to the hoe, return the land is not necessary.

If you only want to plant a *small corner* with wildflowers, just remove the old sod or plants with the hoe; digging is not required. For the seedbed, work the soil superficially, e.g. with a rake.



Les fleurs sauvages illustrées dans ce document se retrouvent dans le mélange pour une terre riche, par Rieger-Hofmann

sowing

help

patience!

watering

It is best is to sow **right before the beginning of wet weather conditions**.

The most favorable periods to sow are in spring from February to May and in autumn from August to October. Autumn sowing favors cold germinators (species that need a period of low temperature to break dormancy).

Since the flower seeds are fine-grained, it is better to mix them with sand, sawdust or ground maize to obtain a uniform result.

Then divide all of your seed mixture in half. Sow the first half of the seeds over the whole area in one direction. In a second step, sow the other half of the seeds in the perpendicular direction.

Wildflower seeds must be sown on the soil surface. **Under no circumstances should the seeds be covered or buried using the rake.**

A crucial step is **the compaction or rolling of the surface** (with wooden planks or a flat shovel) as a close contact with the soil is necessary to ensure a uniform germination.

For very lean soils or gravel substrates, a thin compost layer of 1-2 cm in height can be applied and superficially incorporated prior to sowing.



Achillea millefolium Millefeuille

help

patience!

watering

1st year

In the case of very unfavorable location and sowing conditions (such as strong sunlight, risk of erosion, frost or birds), it is advisable to cover the sowed area slightly. For this purpose, spread about 500g/10m² of hay or straw chaff or 2kg/10m² of weed-free grass clippings very loosely over the concerned area.

The blades of grass must not be so short that they clump together.

The effect is a favorable micro-climate created by the hay layer, which still allows air and light to pass through, but at the same time protects the seeds.



Origanum vulgare Oregano

patience!

watering

1st year

snail

Don't expect too much of your wildflower meadow in the beginning.

The first seedlings, during wet conditions, appear 2 or 3 weeks after sowing.

Some seeds germinate only after surviving the cold of winter. Others are multi-year plants, which at first consist mainly of a rosette of leaves and only few flowers.

In general, it is necessary to wait up to three years before the surface presents its definitive aspect.

It should be known that a certain plant community adapted precisely to the conditions of your surface will persist and settle permanently. The species that are not adapted will disappear. Thus, not all the varieties of flowers contained in the mix of the package will settle sustainably.



Campanula rapunculus Campanule raiponce

watering

1st year

snail

mow

Young newly germinated seedlings require 3 weeks of continuous moisture. If the rain is lacking, water the surface every 2 to 3 days. If you irrigate, do it very carefully.

Sprouted seeds will die if they experience drought stress. On the other hand, if the soil is soaking wet due to irrigation, the young plants will rot. It is very difficult to acquire the ideal moisture artificially. Therefore, it is important to sow at the right time in order to benefit from the rain as much as possible.

After the first few weeks, a freshly sown flower meadow **should not be watered both in the first year and in subsequent years, even during a great period of drought.**



Centaurea scabiosa Centaurée scabieuse

1st year

snail

mow

birds

At best, seeded wildflowers need 4 to 8 weeks to germinate. However, the spontaneous herbs, whose seeds remained in the ground, will already germinate within 2 to 3 weeks.

This is not a problem, because these herbs have the same protective effect as the thin hay layer described in the 'Help' section.

Nevertheless, as soon as the spontaneous herbs are 20-30 cm tall and start competing with the planted seedlings, it is time to mow. Use the maximum cutting height of your mower (at least 8 cm high). The clippings are not left on site, but are evacuated with the collecting bag. If necessary, this procedure may need to be repeated 2-3 times.

Some spontaneous herbs must be removed with their roots and before the formation of seeds, otherwise they will dominate the flowering meadow: thistle, wild sorrel, dandelion.

Thus, the first year, a flowering meadow does not seem to be a success, you may see only weed when you look at it - but do not worry, it must be that way!



Daucus carota Carotte sauvage

snail

mow

birds

Slugs and snails also love sprouting wildflowers, but they only very rarely destroy the entire population:

So do not spread snail and slug bait products!

Moreover, the law of January 2016 prohibits such products on public surfaces.



Crepis biennis Crépis bisannuel

After the starting regime of the first year of sowing (described in the '1st year' paragraph), the flowering meadow needs to be mowed twice a year.

The **first mowing** of the year will be done after the flowering of the grasses and during the flowering of the daisies, approximately in **June**. At this time, it may seem inappropriate to mow this surface in full bloom, but the procedure is the condition for a flowered state from July on, without being dominated by yellowed grass.

Long strands need to be cut: either with a bar mower, a brushcutter or a hand lice.

Let the clippings dry for up to a week (depending on weather conditions). By leaving the cut plants, the seeds will fall. Afterwards, you must remove the mown plants to avoid nutrient input.

The month of July, following the first cut, is often quite rainy. This stimulates budding and the next flowering phase can begin.

Very effective, but rarely applied, is the mowing in alternating patterns: you only mow a third or half of the surface, the other part will be done a little later. So there is always habitat and food for the animals of the meadow, and in the second mowing phase, this method allows thousands of beetles, caterpillars and other small animals to flee in the newly growing part.

The **second mowing** is done in **October / November** or in **winter**. Here, the exact timing is not as important as the weather: it must be dry for a week, so that the mown herb can dry and bring down its seeds. The clippings are also removed during autumn or winter cuts. The clippings are also removed during autumn / winter cuts.



Knautia arvensis Knautie des champs

As for the second mowing, you can wait until late winter, as long as the yellowish or gray color that the surface takes does not disturb visually.

The remaining fruit stands are an important food source and shelter for the birds during the cold winter season.



Calice fructifère de *Anthriscus sylvestris* Cerfeuil sauvage

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