

Wildflower Meadows

Wildflower meadows can be useful in storm water management, increasing infiltration, water quality treatment, flood control, and habitat creation. Wildflower meadows require less water and fertilizers than lawns, saving time and money.

Proper site selection is important. The site should have 6 hours of sunlight per day and be dry and flat. Previously cultivated land like a garden is best, but a lawn can also be transformed into a wildflower meadow. The site should be prepared by removing vegetation. The preparation is much like the preparation for a vegetable garden.

Plant selection must also be given careful consideration. The selected species must be well suited to survive in the conditions present (moisture and temperature needs, etc.). A diversity of species is important, and the species should consist of native plants currently found in the area. A mix of graminoides (grasses) and forbs (flowering meadow wildflowers) is recommended.

Planting should take place in spring, early summer, or early fall. Planting in spring will favor grasses, and planting in fall will favor forbs. The newly planted meadow should be watered like a newly planted lawn for the first 1 to 2 months. For 1 year after planting, do not allow weeds to reach more than one foot before cutting to 4-6 inches. In the second year, cut back to 1 foot since the plants will be larger. For the following years, mow close to the ground in late fall or early spring.

Tips for Planting Wildflower Meadows

- For the first two years, weeds will grow faster than wildflowers. Do not pull weeds; this may damage the wildflower seedlings. Weeds can be smothered with black plastic prior to planting.
- To ensure a heavy bloom, sow seeds at a rate higher than recommended.
- Do not use herbicides. The drift from herbicides may kill large patches of wildflowers along with weeds.



Where To Get Help for wildflower meadow information

- How to Create Your Own Wildflower Meadow;
<http://www.gardenguides.com/how-to/tipstechniques/flowers/wildflowermeadow.asp>
- Creating a Wild Backyard-Wildflower Meadows;
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Pages/habitat/>